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MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

EDINBURGH:
Printed by James Ballantyne & Co.

MISCELLANEOUS

POEMS.

BY

WALTER SCOTT, Esq.

EDINBURGH:

PRINTED FOR ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE AND CO. EDINBURGH;

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1820.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

This Volume contains "The Bridal of Triermain," "Harold the Dauntless," "William and Helen," imitated from the "Leonore" of BURGER, *and all the Smaller Pieces, collected for the first time in the recent edition of the Author's Poems.*

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MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

WILLIAM AND HELEN.

Imitated from the " LENORE" *of* BÜRGER.

THE Author had resolved to omit the following version of a well-known Poem, in any collection which he might make of his poetical trifles. But the publishers having pleaded for its admission, the author has consented, though not unaware of the disadvantage at which this youthful essay (for it was written in 1795) must appear with those which have been executed by much more able hands, in particular that of Mr Taylor of Norwich, and that of Mr Spencer.

The following Translation was written long before the author saw any other, and originated in the following circumstances. A lady of high rank in the literary world read this romantic tale, as translated by Mr Taylor, in the house of the celebrated professor Dugald Stuart of Edinburgh. The author was not present, nor indeed in Edinburgh at the time; but a gentleman who had the pleasure of hearing the ballad, afterwards told him the story, and repeated the remarkable chorus,

" Tramp! tramp! along the land they rode,
" Splash! splash! along the sea;
" Hurrah! hurrah! The dead can ride!
" Dost fear to ride with me?"

In attempting a translation then intended only to circulate among friends, the present author did not hesitate to make use of this impressive stanza; for which freedom he has since obtained the forgiveness of the ingenious gentleman to whom it properly belongs.

WILLIAM AND HELEN.

I.

From heavy dreams fair Helen rose,
And ey'd the dawning red:
"Alas, my love, thou tarriest long!
"O art thou false or dead?"

II.

With gallant Fred'rick's princely power
He sought the bold crusade;
But not a word from Judah's wars
Told Helen how he sped.

III.

With Paynim and with Saracen
At length a truce was made,
And ev'ry knight return'd to dry
The tears his love had shed.

IV.

Our gallant host was homeward bound
With many a song of joy;
Green wav'd the laurel in each plume,
The badge of victory.

V.

And old and young, and sire and son,
To meet them crowd the way,
With shouts, and mirth, and melody,
The debt of love to pay.

VI.

Full many a maid her true love met,
And sobb'd in his embrace,
And flutt'ring joy in tears and smiles
Array'd full many a face.

VII.

Nor joy nor smile for Helen sad;
She sought the host in vain;
For none could tell her William's fate,
If faithless, or if slain.

VIII.

The martial band is past and gone;
She rends her raven hair,
And in distraction's bitter mood
She weeps with wild despair.

IX.

"O rise, my child," her mother said,
"Nor sorrow thus in vain;
"A perjur'd lover's fleeting heart
"No tears recal again."

X.

"O mother, what is gone, is gone,
"What's lost for ever lorn:
"Death, death alone can comfort me;
"O had I ne'er been born!

XI.

"O break, my heart, O break at once!
"Drink my life-blood, despair!
"No joy remains on earth for me,
"For me in heaven no share."

XII.

" O enter not in judgment, Lord !"
The pious mother prays ;
" Impute not guilt to thy frail child !
" She knows not what she says.

XIII.

" O say thy pater noster, child !
" O turn to God and grace !
" His will, that turn'd thy bliss to bale,
" Can change thy bale to bliss."

XIV.

" O mother, mother, what is bliss ?
" O mother, what is bale ?
" My William's love was heaven on earth,
" Without it earth is hell.

XV.

" Why should I pray to ruthless Heav'n,
" Since my lov'd William's slain ?
" I only pray'd for William's sake,
" And all my prayers were vain."

XVI.

" O take the sacrament, my child,
" And check these tears that flow;
" By resignation's humble prayer,
" O hallow'd be thy woe!"

XVII.

" No sacrament can quench this fire,
" Or slake this scorching pain;
" No sacrament can bid the dead
" Arise and live again.

XVIII.

" O break, my heart, O break at once!
" Be thou my god, Despair!
" Heaven's heaviest blow has fall'n on me,
" And vain each fruitless pray'r."

XIX.

" O enter not in judgment, Lord,
" With thy frail child of clay!
" She knows not what her tongue has spoke;
" Impute it not, I pray!

XX.

" Forbear, my child, this desp'rate woe,
" And turn to God and grace;
" Well can devotion's heav'nly glow
" Convert thy bale to bliss."

XXI.

" O mother, mother, what is bliss?
" O mother, what is bale?
" Without my William what were heaven,
" Or with him what were hell?"

XXII.

Wild she arraigns the eternal doom,
Upbraids each sacred power,
Till spent, she sought her silent room,
All in the lonely tower.

XXIII.

She beat her breast, she wrung her hands,
Till sun and day were o'er,
And through the glimm'ring lattice shone
The twinkling of the star.

XXIV.

Then crash! the heavy draw-bridge fell
That o'er the moat was hung;
And clatter! clatter! on its boards
The hoof of courser rung.

XXV.

The clank of echoing steel was heard
As off the rider bounded;
And slowly on the winding stair
A heavy footstep sounded.

XXVI.

And hark! and hark! a knock—Tap! tap!
A rustling stifled noise;—
Door-latch and tinkling staples ring;—
At length a whisp'ring voice.

XXVII.

"Awake, awake, arise, my love!
"How, Helen, dost thou fare?
"Wak'st thou, or sleep'st? laugh'st thou, or weep'st?
"Hast thought on me, my fair?"

XXVIII.

" My love ! my love !—so late by night !—
" I wak'd, I wept for thee :
" Much have I borne since dawn of morn ;
" Where, William, could'st thou be ?"

XXIX.

" We saddle late—From Hungary
" I rode since darkness fell ;
" And to its bourne we both return
" Before the matin bell."

XXX.

" O rest this night within my arms,
" And warm thee in their fold !
" Chill howls through hawthorn bush the wind ;—
" My love is deadly cold."

XXXI.

" Let the wind howl through hawthorn bush !
" This night we must away ;
" The steed is wight, the spur is bright ;
" I cannot stay till day.

XXXII.

" Busk, busk, and boune! Thou mount'st behind
" Upon my black barb steed:
" O'er stock and stile, a hundred miles,
" We haste to bridal bed."

XXXIII.

" To-night—to-night a hundred miles!—
" O dearest William, stay!
" The bell strikes twelve—dark, dismal hour!
" O wait, my love, till day!"

XXXIV.

" Look here, look here—the moon shines clear—
" Full fast I ween we ride;
" Mount and away! for ere the day
" We reach our bridal bed.

XXXV.

" The black barb snorts, the bridle rings;
" Haste, busk, and boune, and seat thee!
" The feast is made, the chamber spread,
" The bridal guests await thee."

XXXVI.

Strong love prevails: She busks, she bounes,
She mounts the barb behind,
And round her darling William's waist
Her lily arms she twined.

XXXVII.

And hurry! hurry! off they rode,
As fast as fast might be;
Spurn'd from the courser's thundering heels
The flashing pebbles flee.

XXXVIII.

And on the right, and on the left,
Ere they could snatch a view,
Fast, fast each mountain, mead and plain,
And cot and castle flew.

XXXIX.

"Sit fast—dost fear?—The moon shines clear—
"Fleet goes my barb—keep hold!
"Fear'st thou!"—"O no!" she faintly said;
"But why so stern and cold?

XL.

" What yonder rings ? what yonder sings ?
" Why shrieks the owlet gray ?"
" 'Tis death-bells clang, 'tis funeral song,
" The body to the clay.

XLI.

" With song and clang, at morrow's dawn,
" Ye may inter the dead :
" To-night I ride, with my young bride,
" To deck our bridal bed.

XLII.

" Come with thy choir, thou coffin'd guest,
" To swell our nuptial song !
" Come, priest, to bless our marriage feast !
" Come all, come all along !"

XLIII.

Ceas'd clang and song ; down sunk the bier ;
The shrouded corpse arose ;
And hurry ! hurry ! all the train
The thund'ring steed pursues.

XLIV.

And forward! forward! on they go;
High snorts the straining steed;
Thick pants the rider's labouring breath,
As headlong on they speed.

XLV.

"O William, why this savage haste?
"And where thy bridal bed?"
"'Tis distant far, low, damp, and chill,
"And narrow, trustless maid."

XLVI.

"No room for me?"—"Enough for both;—
"Speed, speed, my barb, thy course!"
O'er thund'ring bridge, through boiling surge,
He drove the furious horse.

XLVII.

Tramp! tramp! along the land they rode,
Splash! splash! along the sea;
The scourge is wight, the spur is bright,
The flashing pebbles flee.

XLVIII.

Fled past on right and left how fast
Each forest, grove, and bower;
On right and left fled past how fast
Each city, town, and tower!

XLIX.

"Dost fear? dost fear? The moon shines clear,
"Dost fear to ride with me?—
"Hurrah! hurrah! The dead can ride!"
"O William let them be!—

L.

"See there, see there! What yonder swings
"And creaks 'mid whistling rain?"
"Gibbet and steel, th' accursed wheel;
"A murd'rer in his chain.—

LI.

"Hollo! thou felon, follow here:
"To bridal bed we ride;
"And thou shalt prance a fetter dance
"Before me and my bride."

LII.

And hurry! hurry! clash, clash, clash!
The wasted form descends;
And fleet as wind through hazel bush
The wild career attends.

LIII.

Tramp! tramp! along the land they rode,
Splash! splash! along the sea;
The scourge is red, the spur drops blood,
The flashing pebbles flee.

LIV.

How fled what moonshine faintly show'd!
How fled what darkness hid!
How fled the earth beneath their feet,
The heav'n above their head!

LV.

"Dost fear? dost fear? The moon shines clear,
"And well the dead can ride;
"Does faithful Helen fear for them?"
"O leave in peace the dead!"

LVI.

" Barb ! Barb ! methinks I hear the cock ;
" The sand will soon be run :
" Barb ! Barb ! I smell the morning air ;
" The race is well nigh done."

LVII.

Tramp ! tramp ! along the land they rode,
Splash ! splash ! along the sea ;
The scourge is red, the spur drops blood,
The flashing pebbles flee.

LVIII.

" Hurrah ! hurrah ! well ride the dead ;
" The bride, the bride is come !
" And soon we reach the bridal bed,
" For, Helen, here's my home."

LIX.

Reluctant on its rusty hinge
Revolv'd an iron door,
And by the pale moon's setting beam
Were seen a church and tow'r.

LX.

With many a shriek and cry whiz round
The birds of midnight, scared;
And rustling like autumnal leaves
Unhallow'd ghosts were heard.

LXI.

O'er many a tomb and tomb-stone pale
He spurr'd the fiery horse,
Till sudden at an open grave
He check'd the wond'rous course.

LXII.

The falling gauntlet quits the rein,
Down drops the casque of steel,
The cuirass leaves his shrinking side,
The spur his gory heel.

LXIII.

The eyes desert the naked skull,
The mould'ring flesh the bone,
Till Helen's lily arms entwine
A ghastly skeleton.

LXIV.

The furious barb snorts fire and foam,
And, with a fearful bound,
Dissolves at once in empty air,
And leaves her on the ground.

LXV.

Half seen by fits, by fits half heard,
Pale spectres flit along,
Wheel round the maid in dismal dance,
And howl the funeral song;

LXVI.

" E'en when the heart's with anguish cleft,
" Revere the doom of Heav'n.
" Her soul is from her body reft;
" Her spirit be forgiven !"

THE

BATTLE OF SEMPACH.

These verses are a literal translation of an ancient Swiss ballad upon the battle of Sempach, fought 9th July 1386, being the victory by which the Swiss cantons established their independence; the author, Albert Tchudi, denominated the Souter, from his profession of a shoemaker. He was a citizen of Lucerne, esteemed highly among his countrymen, both for his powers as a *Meister-singer* or minstrel, and his courage as a soldier; so that he might share the praise conferred by Collins on Eschylus, that—

> ——Not alone he nursed the poet's flame,
> But reached from Virtue's hand the patriot steel.

The circumstance of their being written by a poet returning from the well-fought field he describes, and in which his country's fortune was secured, may confer on Tchudi's verses an interest which they are not entitled to claim from their poetical merit. But ballad poetry, the more literally it is translated, the more it

loses its simplicity, without acquiring either grace or strength; and therefore some of the faults of the verses must be imputed to the translator's feeling it a duty to keep as closely as possible to his original. The various puns, rude attempts at pleasantry, and disproportioned episodes, must be set down to Tchudi's account, or to the taste of his age.

The military antiquary will derive some amusement from the minute particulars which the martial poet has recorded. The mode in which the Austrian men-at-arms received the charge of the Swiss, was by forming a phalanx, which they defended with their long lances. The gallant Winkelried, who sacrificed his own life by rushing among the spears, clasping in his arms as many as he could grasp, and thus opening a gap in these iron battalions, is celebrated in Swiss history. When fairly mingled together, the unwieldy length of their weapons, and cumbrous weight of their defensive armour, rendered the Austrian men-at-arms a very unequal match for the light-armed mountaineers. The victories obtained by the Swiss over the German chivalry, hitherto deemed as formidable on foot as on horseback, led to important changes in the art of war. The poet describes the Austrian knights and squires as cutting the peaks from their boots ere they could act upon foot, in allusion to an inconvenient piece of foppery, often mentioned in the middle ages. Leopold III. Archduke of Austria, called "The handsome man-at-arms," was slain in the battle of Sempach, with the flower of his chivalry.

THE

BATTLE OF SEMPACH.

'Twas when among our linden trees
The bees had housed in swarms,
(And gray-hair'd peasants say that these
Betoken foreign arms,)

Then look'd we down to Willisow,
The land was all in flame;
We knew the Archduke Leopold
With all his army came.

The Austrian nobles made their vow,
So hot their heart and bold,
"On Switzer carles we'll trample now,
And slay both young and old."

With clarion loud, and banner proud,
From Zurich on the lake,
In martial pomp and fair array,
Their onward march they make.

" Now list, ye lowland nobles all,
Ye seek the mountain strand,
Nor wot ye what shall be your lot
In such a dangerous land.

" I rede ye, shrive you of your sins,
Before you further go;
A skirmish in Helvetian hills
May send your souls to woe."

" But where now shall we find a priest
Our shrift that he may hear?"—
" The Switzer priest* has ta'en the field,
He deals a penance drear.

* All the Swiss clergy, who were able to bear arms, fought in this patriotic war.

" Right heavily upon your head
He'll lay his hand of steel;
And with his trusty partizan
Your absolution deal."—

'Twas on a Monday morning then,
The corn was steep'd in dew,
And merry maids had sickles ta'en,
When the host to Sempach drew.

The stalwart men of fair Lucerne
Together have they join'd;
The pith and core of manhood stern,
Was none cast looks behind.

It was the Lord of Hare-castle,
And to the Duke he said,
" Yon little band of brethren true
Will meet us undismay'd."

" O Hare-castle,* thou heart of hare!"
Fierce Oxenstern replied.
" Shalt see then how the game will fare,"
The taunted knight replied.

There was lacing then of helmets bright,
And closing ranks amain;
The peaks they hew'd from their boot-points
Might well nigh load a wain.†

And thus, they to each other said,
" Yon handful down to hew
Will be no boastful tale to tell,
The peasants are so few."

The gallant Swiss Confederates there,
They pray'd to God aloud,

---

* In the original, *Haasenstein*, or *Hare-stone*.

† This seems to allude to the preposterous fashion, during the middle ages, of wearing boots with the points or peaks turned upwards, and so long, that in some cases they were fastened to the knees of the wearer with

And he display'd his rainbow fair
Against a swarthy cloud.

Then heart and pulse throbb'd more and more
With courage firm and high,
And down the good Confed'rates bore
On the Austrian chivalry.

The Austrian Lion* 'gan to growl,
And toss his mane and tail;
And ball, and shaft, and cross-bow bolt
Went whistling forth like hail.

Lance, pike, and halberd, mingled there,
The game was nothing sweet;
The boughs of many a stately tree
Lay shiver'd at their feet.

---

small chains. When they alighted to fight on foot, it would seem that the Austrian gentlemen found it necessary to cut off these peaks, that they might move with the necessary activity.

* A pun on the Archduke's name, Leopold.

The Austrian men-at-arms stood fast,
So close their spears they laid;
It chafed the gallant Winkelried,
Who to his comrades said—

"I have a virtuous wife at home,
A wife and infant son;
I leave them to my country's care,—
This field shall soon be won.

"These nobles lay their spears right thick,
And keep full firm array,
Yet shall my charge their order break,
And make my brethren way."

He rush'd against the Austrian band,
In desperate career,
And with his body, breast, and hand,
Bore down each hostile spear.

Four lances splinter'd on his crest,
Six shiver'd in his side;
Still on the serried files he press'd—
He broke their ranks, and died.

This patriot's self-devoted deed
First tamed the Lion's mood,
And the four Forest Cantons freed
From thraldom by his blood.

Right where his charge had made a lane,
His valiant comrades burst,
With sword and axe, and partizan,
And hack, and stab, and thrust.

The daunted Lion 'gan to whine,
And granted ground amain,
The Mountain Bull,* he bent his brows,
And gored his sides again.

---

* A pun on the URUS, or wild bull, which gives name to the canton of Uri.

Then lost was banner, spear, and shield,
At Sempach in the flight,
The cloister vaults at Konig'sfield
Hold many an Austrian knight.

It was the Archduke Leopold,
So lordly would he ride,
But he came against the Switzer churls,
And they slew him in his pride.

The heifer said unto the bull,
" And shall I not complain ?
There came a foreign nobleman
To milk me on the plain.

" One thrust of thine outrageous horn
Has gall'd the knight so sore,
That to the churchyard he is borne,
To range our glens no more."—

An Austrian noble left the stour,
And fast the flight 'gan take;
And he arrived in luckless hour
At Sempach on the lake.

He and his squire a fisher call'd,
(His name was Hans Von Rot)
"For love, or meed, or charity,
Receive us in thy boat."

Their anxious call the fisher heard,
And, glad the meed to win,
His shallop to the shore he steer'd,
And took the flyers in.

And while against the tide and wind
Hans stoutly row'd his way,
The noble to his follower sign'd
He should the boatman slay.

The fisher's back was to them turn'd,
The squire his dagger drew,
Hans saw his shadow in the lake,
The boat he overthrew.

He 'whelm'd the boat, and as they strove,
He stunn'd them with his oar,
" Now, drink ye deep, my gentle sirs,
You'll ne'er stab boatman more.

" Two gilded fishes in the lake
This morning have I caught,
Their silver scales may much avail,
Their carrion flesh is naught."

It was a messenger of woe
Has sought the Austrian land;
" Ah! gracious lady, evil news!
My lord lies on the strand.

" At Sempach, on the battle field,
His bloody corpse lies there :"
" Ah, gracious God !" the lady cried,
" What tidings of despair !"

Now would you know the minstrel wight,
Who sings of strife so stern,
Albert the Souter is he hight,
A burgher of Lucerne.

A merry man was he, I wot,
The night he made the lay,
Returning from the bloody spot,
Where God had judged the day.

THE

NOBLE MORINGER.

AN ANCIENT BALLAD,

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN.

The original of these verses occurs in a collection of German popular songs, entitled Sammlung Deutchen Volkslieder, Berlin 1807, published by Messrs Busching and Von der Hagen, both, and more especially the last, distinguished for their acquaintance with the ancient popular poetry and legendary history of Germany.

In the German Editor's notice of the ballad, it is stated to have been extracted from a manuscript Chronicle of Nicolaus Thomann, chaplain to Saint Leonard in Weisenhorn, which bears the date *1533;* and the song is stated by the author to have been generally sung in the neighbourhood at that early period. Thomann, as quoted by the German Editor, seems faithfully to have believed the event he narrates. He quotes tomb-stones and obituaries to prove the existence of the personages of the ballad, and discovers that there

actually died on the 11th May 1349, a Lady Von Neuffen, Countess of Marstetten, who was by birth of the house of Moringer. This lady he supposes to have been Moringer's daughter mentioned in the ballad. He quotes the same authority for the death of Berekhold Von Neuffen in the same year. The editor, on the whole, seems to embrace the opinion of Professor Smith of Ulm, who, from the language of the ballad, ascribes its date to the fifteenth century.

The legend itself turns on an incident not peculiar to Germany, and which perhaps was not unlikely to happen in more instances than one, when crusaders abode long in the Holy Land, and their disconsolate dames received no tidings of their fate. A story very similar in circumstances, but without the miraculous machinery of Saint Thomas, is told of one of the ancient Lords of Haigh-hall in Lancashire, the patrimonial inheritance of the late Countess of Balcarras; and the particulars are represented on stained glass upon a window in that ancient manor house.

THE

NOBLE MORINGER.

I.

O, will you hear a knightly tale of old Bohemian day,
It was the noble Moringer in wedlock bed he lay;
He halsed and kiss'd his dearest dame, that was as sweet as May,
And said, " Now, lady of my heart, attend the words I say

II.

" 'Tis I have vow'd a pilgrimage unto a distant shrine,
And I must seek Saint Thomas-land, and leave the land that's mine;
Here shalt thou dwell the while in state, so thou wilt pledge thy fay,
That thou for my return wilt wait seven twelvemonths and a day."

III.

Then out and spoke that Lady bright, sore troubled in her cheer,
" Now tell me true, thou noble knight, what order takest thou here;
And who shall lead thy vassal band, and hold thy lordly sway,
And be thy lady's guardian true when thou art far away?"

IV.

Out spoke the noble Moringer, " Of that have thou no care,
There's many a valiant gentleman of me holds living fair,
The trustiest shall rule my land, my vassals and my state,
And be a guardian tried and true to thee, my lovely mate.

V.

" As Christian-man, I needs must keep the vow which I have plight,
When I am far in foreign land, remember thy true knight;
And cease, my dearest dame, to grieve, for vain were sorrow now,
But grant thy Moringer his leave, since God hath heard his vow."

VI.

It was the noble Moringer from bed he made him bowne,
And met him there his Chamberlain, with ewer and with gown:
He flung the mantle on his back, 'twas furr'd with miniver,
He dipp'd his hand in water cold, and bathed his forehead fair.

VII.

"Now hear," he said, "Sir Chamberlain, true vassal art thou mine,
And such the trust that I repose in that proved worth of thine,
For seven years shalt thou rule my towers, and lead my vassal train,
And pledge thee for my Lady's faith till I return again."

VIII.

The Chamberlain was blunt and true, and sturdily said he,
"Abide, my lord, and rule your own, and take this rede from me;
That woman's faith's a brittle trust—Seven twelvemonths did'st thou say?
I'll pledge me for no lady's truth beyond the seventh fair day."

IX.

The noble Baron turn'd him round, his heart was full of care,
His gallant Esquire stood him nigh, he was Marstetten's heir,
To whom he spoke right anxiously, " Thou trusty squire to me,
Wilt thou receive this weighty trust when I am o'er the sea?

X.

" To watch and ward my castle strong, and to protect my land,
And to the hunting or the host to lead my vassal band;
And pledge thee for my Lady's faith, till seven long years are gone,
And guard her as Our Lady dear was guarded by Saint John."

XI.

Marstetten's heir was kind and true, but fiery, hot, and young,
And readily he answer made with too presumptuous tongue;
" My noble lord, cast care away, and on your journey wend,
And trust this charge to me until your pilgrimage have end.

XII.

" Rely upon my plighted faith, which shall be truly tried,
To guard your lands, and ward your towers, and with your vassals ride ;
And for your lovely Lady's faith, so virtuous and so dear,
I'll gage my head it knows no change, be absent thirty year."

XIII.

The noble Moringer took cheer when thus he heard him speak,
And doubt forsook his troubled brow, and sorrow left his cheek ;
A long adieu he bids to all—hoists top-sails, and away,
And wanders in Saint Thomas-land seven twelvemonths and a day.

XIV.

It was the noble Moringer within an orchard slept,
When on the Baron's slumbering sense a boding vision crept ;
And whisper'd in his ear a voice, " 'Tis time, Sir Knight, to wake,
Thy lady and thine heritage another master take.

XV.

" Thy tower another banner knows, thy steeds another rein,
And stoop them to another's will thy gallant vassal train;
And she, the Lady of thy love, so faithful once and fair,
This night within thy father's hall she weds Marstetten's heir."

XVI.

It is the noble Moringer starts up and tears his beard,
" Oh would that I had ne'er been born! what tidings have I heard!
To lose my lordship and my lands the less would be my care,
But, God! that ere a squire untrue should wed my Lady fair!

XVII.

" O good Saint Thomas, hear," he pray'd, " my patron Saint art thou,
A traitor robs me of my land even while I pay my vow!
My wife he brings to infamy that was so pure of name,
And I am far in foreign land, and must endure the shame."

XVIII.

It was the good Saint Thomas, then, who heard his pilgrim's prayer,
And sent a sleep so deep and dead that it o'erpower'd his care;
He waked in fair Bohemian land, outstretch'd beside a rill,
High on the right a castle stood, low on the left a mill.

XIX.

The Moringer he started up as one from spell unbound,
And dizzy with surprise and joy gazed wildly all around;
" I know my father's ancient towers, the mill, the stream, I know,
Now blessed be my patron Saint who cheer'd his pilgrim's woe !"

XX.

He leant upon his pilgrim staff, and to the mill he drew,
So alter'd was his goodly form that none their master knew;
The Baron to the miller said, " Good friend, for charity,
Tell a poor palmer in your land what tidings may there be ?"

XXI.

The miller answer'd him again, " He knew of little news,
Save that the Lady of the land did a new bridegroom chuse;
Her husband died in distant land, such is the constant word,
His death sits heavy on our souls, he was a worthy Lord.

XXII.

" Of him I held the little mill which wins me living free,
God rest the Baron in his grave, he still was kind to me;
And when Saint Martin's tide comes round, and millers take
their toll,
The priest that prays for Moringer shall have both cope and
stole."

XXIII.

It was the noble Moringer to climb the hill began,
And stood before the bolted gate a woe and weary man;
" Now help me, every saint in heaven that can compassion
take,
To gain the entrance of my hall this woeful match to break."

XXIV.

His very knock it sounded sad, his call was sad and slow,
For heart and head, and voice and hand, were heavy all with woe ;
And to the warder thus he spoke : " Friend, to thy Lady say,
A pilgrim from Saint Thomas-land craves harbour for a day.

XXV.

" I've wander'd many a weary step, my strength is well nigh done,
And if she turn me from her gate I'll see no morrow's sun ;
I pray, for sweet Saint Thomas' sake, a pilgrim's bed and dole,
And for the sake of Moringer's, her once loved husband's soul."

XXVI.

It was the stalwart warder then he came his dame before,
" A pilgrim worn and travel-toil'd stands at the castle door ;
And prays for sweet Saint Thomas' sake, for harbour and for dole,
And for the sake of Moringer, thy noble husband's soul."

XXVII.

The Lady's gentle heart was moved, " Do up the gate," she said,
" And bid the wanderer welcome be to banquet and to bed;
And since he names my husband's name, so that he lists to stay,
These towers shall be his harbourage a twelvemonth and a day."

XXVIII.

It was the stalwart warder then undid the portal broad,
It was the noble Moringer that o'er the threshold strode;
" And have thou thanks, kind heaven," he said, " though from a man of sin,
That the true lord stands here once more his castle gate within."

XXIX.

Then up the hall paced Moringer, his step was sad and slow,
It sat full heavy on his heart, none seem'd their Lord to know;
He sat him on a lowly bench, oppress'd with woe and wrong,
Short space he sat, but ne'er to him seem'd little space so long.

XXX.

Now spent was day, and feasting o'er, and come was evening hour,
The time was nigh when new-made brides retire to nuptial bower;
" Our castle's wont," a brides-man said, " hath been both firm and long,
No guest to harbour in our halls till he shall chaunt a song."

XXXI.

Then spoke the youthful bridegroom there as he sat by the bride,
" My merry minstrel folks," quoth he, " lay shalm and harp aside;
Our pilgrim guest must sing a lay, the castle's rule to hold,
And well his guerdon will I pay with garment and with gold."

XXXII.

" Chill flows the lay of frozen age," 'twas thus the pilgrim sung,
" Nor golden mead, nor garment gay, unlocks her heavy tongue;

Once did I sit, thou bridegroom gay, at board as rich as thine,
And by my side as fair a bride with all her charms was mine.

XXXIII.

"But time traced furrows on my face, and I grew silver-hair'd,
For locks of brown, and cheeks of youth, she left this brow and beard;
Once rich, but now a palmer poor, I tread life's latest stage,
And mingle with your bridal mirth the lay of frozen age."

XXXIV.

It was the noble Lady there this woeful lay that hears,
And for the aged pilgrim's grief her eye was dimm'd with tears;
She bade her gallant cup-bearer a golden beaker take,
And bear it to the palmer poor to quaff it for her sake.

XXXV.

It was the noble Moringer that dropp'd amid the wine
A bridal ring of burnish'd gold so costly and so fine:
Now listen, gentles, to my song, it tells you but the sooth,
'Twas with that very ring of gold he pledged his bridal truth.

XXXVI.

Then to the cup-bearer he said, " Do me one kindly deed,
And should my better days return, full rich shall be thy meed;
Bear back the golden cup again to yonder bride so gay,
And crave her of her courtesy to pledge the palmer gray."

XXXVII.

The cup-bearer was courtly bred, nor was the boon denied,
The golden cup he took again, and bore it to the bride;
" Lady," he said, " your reverend guest sends this, and bids
me pray,
That, in thy noble courtesy, thou pledge the palmer gray."

XXXVIII.

The ring hath caught the Lady's eye, she views it close and
near,
Then might you hear her shriek aloud, " The Moringer is
here!"
Then might you see her start from seat, while tears in tor-
rents fell,—
But whether 'twas for joy or woe the ladies best can tell.

XXXIX.

But loud she utter'd thanks to heaven, and every saintly power,
That had return'd the Moringer before the midnight hour;
And loud she utter'd vow on vow, that never was there bride
That had like her preserved her troth, or been so sorely tried.

XL.

" Yes, here I claim the praise," she said, " to constant matrons due,
Who keep the troth that they have plight so stedfastly and true;
For count the term howe'er you will, so that you count aright,
Seven twelvemonths and a day are out when bells toll twelve to-night."

XLI.

It was Marstetten then rose up, his falchion there he drew,
He kneel'd before the Moringer, and down his weapon threw;
" My oath and knightly faith are broke," these were the words he said,
" Then take, my liege, thy vassal's sword, and take thy vassal's head."

XLII.

The noble Moringer he smiled, and then aloud did say,
" He gathers wisdom that hath roam'd seven twelvemonths
and a day;
My daughter now hath fifteen years, fame speaks her sweet
and fair,
I give her for the bride you lose, and name her for my heir.

XLIII.

" The young bridegroom hath youthful bride, the old
bridegroom the old,
Whose faith was kept till term and tide so punctually were
told;
But blessings on the warder kind that oped my castle gate
For had I come at morrow tide, I came a day too late."

SONGS.

JOCK OF HAZELDEAN.

AIR—"*A Border Melody.*"

The first stanza of this ballad is ancient. The others were written for Mr Campbell's Albyn's Anthology.

I.

"WHY weep ye by the tide, ladie?
Why weep ye by the tide?
I'll wed ye to my youngest son,
And ye sall be his bride:
And ye sall be his bride, ladie,
Sae comely to be seen"—
But aye she loot the tears down fa',
For Jock of Hazeldean.

II.

" Now let this wilful grief be done,
And dry that cheek so pale;
Young Frank is chief of Errington,
And lord of Langley-dale;
His step is first in peaceful ha',
His sword in battle keen"—
But aye she loot the tears down fa'
For Jock of Hazeldean.

III.

" A chain o' gold ye sall not lack,
Nor braid to bind your hair;
Nor mettled hound, nor managed hawk,
Nor palfrey fresh and fair;
And you, the foremost o' them a',
Shall ride our forest queen"—
But aye she loot the tears down fa'
For Jock of Hazeldean.

IV.

The kirk was deck'd at morning-tide,
The tapers glimmer'd fair ;
The priest and bridegroom wait the bride,
And dame and knight are there.
They sought her both by bower and ha',
The ladie was not seen !
She's o'er the Border, and awa
Wi' Jock of Hazledean.

LULLABY OF AN INFANT CHIEF.

AIR—"*Gadil gu lo.*"*

I.

O hush thee, my babie, thy sire was a knight;
Thy mother a lady, both lovely and bright;
The woods and the glens, from the towers which we see,
They all are belonging, dear baby, to thee.

O ho ro, i ri ri, cadil gu lo,
O ho ro, i ri ri, &c.

II.

O fear not the bugle, though loudly it blows,
It calls but the warders that guard thy repose;

* "Sleep on till day." These words, adapted to a melody somewhat different from the original, are sung in my friend Mr Terry's drama of Guy Mannering.

Their bows would be bended, their blades would be red,
Ere the step of a foeman draws near to thy bed.
O ho ro, i ri ri, &c.

III.

O hush thee, my baby, the time soon will come,
When thy sleep shall be broken by trumpet and drum;
Then hush thee, my darling, take rest while you may,
For strife comes with manhood, and waking with day.
O ho ro, i ri ri, &c.

PIBROCH OF DONALD DHU.

Written for Albyn's Anthology.

Air—"*Piobair of Dhonuil Duibh.*"

This is a very ancient Pibroch belonging to the clan MacDonald, and supposed to refer to the expedition of Donald Balloch, who, in 1431, launched from the Isles with a considerable force, invaded Lochaber, and at Inverlochy defeated and put to flight the Earls of Mar and Caithness, though at the head of an army superior to his own. The words of the set, theme, or melody, to which the pipe variations are applied, run thus in Gaelic:

Piobaireachd Dhonuil, piobaireachd Dhonuil;
Piobaireachd Dhonuil Duidh, piobaireachd Dhonuil;
Piobaireachd Dhonuil Dhuidh, piobaireachd Dhonuil;
Piob agus bratach air faiche Inverlochi.

---

* The pibroch of Donald the Black.

The pipe-summons of Donald the Black,
The pipe-summons of Donald the Black,
The war-pipe and the pennon are on the gathering place at Inverlochy.

Pibroch of Donuil Dhu,
Pibroch of Donuil,
Wake thy wild voice anew,
Summon Clan-Conuil.
Come away, come away,
Hark to the summons!
Come in your war array,
Gentles and commons.

Come from deep glen, and
From mountain so rocky,
The war-pipe and pennon
Are at Inverlocky:
Come every hill-plaid, and
True heart that wears one,
Come every steel blade, and
Strong hand that bears one.

Leave untended the herd,
The flock without shelter;
Leave the corpse uninterr'd,
The bride at the altar;
Leave the deer, leave the steer;
Leave nets and barges;
Come with your fighting gear,
Broad swords and targes.

Come as the winds come, when
Forests are rended;
Come as the waves come, when
Navies are stranded:
Faster come, faster come,
Faster and faster,
Chief, vassal, page, and groom,
Tenant and master.

Fast they come, fast they come:
See how they gather!

Wide waves the eagle plume,
Blended with heather.
Cast your plaids, draw your blades,
Forward each man set!
Pibroch of Donuil Dhu,
Knell for the onset!

NORA'S VOW.

AIR—"*Cha teid mis a chaoidh.*" *

Written for Albyn's Anthology.

In the original Gaelic, the lady makes protestations that she will not go with the Red Earl's son until the swan should build in the cliff, and the eagle in the lake—until one mountain should change places with another, and so forth. It is but fair to add that there is no authority for supposing that she altered her mind—except the vehemence of her protestations.

I.

HEAR what Highland Nora said,
"The Earlie's son I will not wed,
Should all the race of nature die,
And none be left but he and I.

* "I will never go with him."

For all the gold, for all the gear,
And all the lands both far and near,
That ever valour lost or won,
I would not wed the Earlic's son."

II.

" A maiden's vows," old Callam spoke,
" Are lightly made, and lightly broke ;
The heather on the mountain's height
Begins to bloom in purple light ;
The frost-wind soon shall sweep away
That lustre deep from glen and brae ;
Yet, Nora, ere its bloom be gone,
May blythely wed the Earlic's son."

III.

" The swan," she said, " the lake's clear breast
May barter for the eagle's nest ;
The Awe's fierce stream may backward turn,
Ben-Cruaichan fall, and crush Kilchurn,

Our kilted clans, when blood is high,
Before their foes may turn and fly;
But I, were all these marvels done,
Would never wed the Earlie's son."

IV.

Still in the water-lily's shade
Her wonted nest the wild swan made,
Ben-Cruaichan stands as fast as ever,
Still downward foams the Awe's fierce river;
To shun the clash of foeman's steel,
No Highland brogue has turn'd the heel;
But Nora's heart is lost and won,
—She's wedded to the Earlie's son!

MACGREGOR'S GATHERING.

AIR—"*Thain' a Grigalach.*"*

Written for Albyn's Anthology.

These verses are adapted to a very wild, yet lively gathering-tune, used by the MacGregors. The severe treatment of this clan, their outlawry, and the proscription of their very name, are alluded to in the Ballad.

THE moon's on the lake, and the mist's on the brae,
And the Clan has a name that is nameless by day!
Then gather, gather, gather Gregalach!
Gather, gather, gather, &c.

* "The MacGregor is come."

Our signal for fight, that from monarchs we drew,
Must be heard but by night in our vengeful haloo!
Then haloo, Gregalach! haloo, Gregalach!
Haloo, haloo, haloo, Gregalach, &c.

Glen Orchy's proud mountains, Coalchuirn and her towers,
Glenstrae and Glenlyon no longer are ours:
We're landless, landless, landless, Gregalach!
Landless, landless, landless, &c.

But doom'd and devoted by vassal and lord,
MacGregor has still both his heart and his sword!
Then courage, courage, courage, Gregalach!
Courage, courage, courage, &c.

If they rob us of name and pursue us with beagles,
Give their roofs to the flame, and their flesh to the eagles!
Then vengeance, vengeance, vengeance, Gregalach!
Vengeance, vengeance, vengeance, &c.

While there's leaves in the forest, and foam on the river,
MacGregor, despite them, shall flourish forever!
Come then, Gregalach, come then, Gregalach!
Come then, come then, come then, &c.

Through the depths of Loch Katrine the steed shall career,
O'er the peak of Ben-Lomond the galley shall steer,
And the rocks of Craig Royston like icicles melt,
Ere our wrongs be forgot, or our vengeance unfelt!
Then gather, gather, gather, Gregalach!
Gather, gather, gather, &c.

DONALD CAIRD'S COME AGAIN.

AIR—"*Malcolm Caird's come again.*"*

CHORUS.

DONALD Caird's come again!
Donald Caird's come again!
Tell the news in brugh and glen,
Donald Caird's come again!

Donald Caird can lilt and sing,
Blithely dance the Hieland fling,

* Caird signifies Tinker.

Drink till the gudeman be blind,
Fleech till the gudewife be kind;
Hoop a leglen, clout a pan,
Or crack a pow wi' ony man;
Tell the news in brugh or glen,
Donald Caird's come again.

Donald Caird's come again!
Donald Caird's come again!
Tell the news in brugh or glen,
Donald Caird's come again!

Donald Caird can wire a maukin,
Kens the wiles o' dun deer staukin,
Leisters kipper, makes a shift
To shoot a muir-fowl in the drift;
Water-bailiffs, rangers, keepers,
He can wauk when they are sleepers;
Not for bountith or reward
Dare ye mell wi' Donald Caird.

Donald Caird's come again!
Donald Caird's come again!
Gar the bag-pipes hum amain,
Donald Caird's come again.

Donald Caird can drink a gill
Fast as hostler-wife can fill;
Ilka ane that sells gude liquor
Kens how Donald bends a bicker;
When he's fou he's stout and saucy,
Keeps the cantle of the cawsey;
Highland chief and Lawland laird,
Maun gi'e room to Donald Caird!
Donald Caird's come again!
Donald Caird's come again!
Tell the news in brugh or glen,
Donald Caird's come again.

Steek the amrie, lock the kist,
Else some gear may weel be mist;

Donald Caird finds orra things
Where Allan Gregor fand the tings;
Dunts of kebbock, taits of woo,
Whiles a hen and whiles a sow,
Webs or duds frae hedge or yard—
'Ware the wuddie, Donald Caird!
Donald Caird's come again!
Donald Caird's come again!
Dinna let the Shirra ken
Donald Caird's come again.

On Donald Caird the doom was stern,
Craig to tether, legs to airn;
But Donald Caird wi' mickle study,
Caught the gift to cheat the wuddie;
Rings of airn, and bolts of steel,
Fell like ice frae hand and heel!
Watch the sheep in fauld and glen,
Donald Caird's come again!

Donald Caird's come again!
Donald Caird's come again!
Dinna let the Justice ken
Donald Caird's come again!

MACKRIMMON'S LAMENT.

AIR—"*Cha till mi tuille.*"*

Mackrimmon, hereditary piper to the Laird of Macleod, is said to have composed this lament when the Clan was about to depart upon a distant and dangerous expedition. The Minstrel was impressed with a belief, which the event verified, that he was to be slain in the approaching feud; and hence the Gaelic words, "*Cha till mi tuille; ged thillis Macleod, cha till Macrimmon,*" "I shall never return; although Macleod returns, yet Mackrimmon shall never return!" The piece is but too well known, from its being the strain with which the emigrants from the West Highlands and Isles usually take leave of their native shore.

MACLEOD'S wizard flag from the gray castle sallies,
The rowers are seated, unmoor'd are the gallies;
Gleam war-axe and broad-sword, clang target and quiver,
As Mackrimmon sings, "Farewell to Dunvegan for ever!

* "We return no more."

Farewell to each cliff, on which breakers are foaming;
Farewell each dark glen, in which red deer are roaming;
Farewell lonely SKYE, to lake, mountain, and river,
Macleod may return, but Mackrimmon shall never!

"Farewell the bright clouds that on Quillan are sleeping;
Farewell the bright eyes in the Dun that are weeping;
To each minstrel-delusion, farewell!—and for ever—
Mackrimmon departs, to return to you never!
The *Banshee's* wild voice sings the death-dirge before me,
The pall of the dead for a mantle hangs o'er me;
But my heart shall not flag, and my nerves shall not shiver,
Though devoted I go—to return again never!

"Too oft shall the notes of Mackrimmon's bewailing
Be heard when the GAEL on their exile are sailing;
Dear land! to the shores, whence unwilling we sever
Return—return—return—shall we never!

Cha till, cha till, cha till sin tuille!
Cha till, cha till, cha till sin tuille,
Cha till, cha till, cha till sin tuille,
Ged thillis Macleod, cha till Macrimmon!

THE

LAST WORDS OF CADWALLON.

AIR—"*Dafydd y Garreg-wen.*"*

Written for Mr GEORGE THOMSON's Welch Melodies.

There is a tradition that Dafydd y Garreg-wen, a famous Welsh Bard, being on his death-bed, called for his harp, and composed the sweet melancholy air to which these verses are united, requesting that it might be performed at his funeral.

DINAS EMLINN, lament, for the moment is nigh,
When mute in the woodlands thine echoes shall die;
No more by sweet Teivi CADWALLON shall rave,
And mix his wild notes with the wild dashing wave.

* "David of the White Rock."

In spring and in autumn thy glories of shade
Unhonour'd shall flourish, unhonour'd shall fade;
For soon shall be lifeless the eye and the tongue,
That view'd them with rapture—with rapture that sung.

Thy sons, Dinas Emlinn, may march in their pride,
And chase the proud Saxon from Prestatyn's side;
But where is the harp shall give life to their name?
And where is the bard shall give heroes their fame?

And Oh, Dinas Emlinn! thy daughters so fair,
Who heave the white bosom, and wave the dark hair,
What tuneful enthusiast shall worship their eye,
When half of their charms with CADWALLON shall die?

Then adieu, silver Teivi! I quit thy loved scene,
To join the dim choir of the bards who have been;
With Lewarch, and Meilor, and Merlin the old,
And sage Taliessin, high harping to hold.

And adieu, Dinas Emlinn ! still green be thy shades,
Unconquer'd thy warriors, and matchless thy maids !
And thou, whose faint warblings my weakness can tell,
Farewell, my lov'd harp ! my last treasure, farewell !

THE

SUN UPON THE WEIRDLAW HILL.

AIR—"*Rimhin aluin 'stu mo run.*"

The air, composed by the Editor of Albyn's Anthology. The words written for Mr GEORGE THOMSON's Scottish Melodies.

THE sun upon the Weirdlaw hill,
In Ettrick's vale, is sinking sweet;
The westland wind is hush and still,
The lake lies sleeping at my feet.
Yet not the landscape to mine eye
Bears those bright hues that once it bore;
Though evening, with her richest dye,
Flames o'er the hills of Ettrick's shore.

With listless look, along the plain
I see Tweed's silver current glide,
And coldly mark the holy fane
Of Melrose rise in ruin'd pride.
The quiet lake, the balmy air,
The hill, the stream, the tower, the tree,—
Are they still such as once they were,
Or is the dreary change in me ?

Alas, the warp'd and broken board,
How can it bear the painter's dye !
The harp of strain'd and tuneless chord,
How to the minstrel's skill reply !
To aching eyes each landscape lowers,
To feverish pulse each gale blows chill ;
And Araby's or Eden's bowers
Were barren as this moorland hill.

THE MAID OF ISLA.

AIR—"*The Maid of Isla.*"

Written for Mr GEORGE THOMSON's Scottish Melodies.

O MAID of Isla, from the cliff,
That looks on troubled wave and sky,
Dost thou not see yon little skiff
Contend with ocean gallantly?
Now beating 'gainst the breeze and surge,
And steep'd her leeward deck in foam,
Why does she war unequal urge?—
O Isla's maid, she seeks her home.

O Isla's maid, yon sea-bird mark,
Her white wing gleams through mist and spray,

Against the storm-cloud, lowering dark,
As to the rock she wheels away ;—
Where clouds are dark and billows rave,
Why to the shelter should she come
Of cliff exposed to wind and wave ?—
O maid of Isla, 'tis her home.

As breeze and tide to yonder skiff,
Thou'rt adverse to the suit I bring,
And cold as is yon wintry cliff,
Where sea-birds close their wearied wing.
Yet cold as rock, unkind as wave,
Still, Isla's maid, to thee I come ;
For in thy love, or in his grave,
Must Allan Vourich find his home.

THE FORAY.

Set to music by JOHN WHITEFIELD, Mus. Doc. Cam.

THE last of our steers on the board has been spread,
And the last flask of wine in our goblets is red;
Up! up, my brave kinsmen! belt swords and begone!
There are dangers to dare, and there's spoil to be won.

The eyes, that so lately mix'd glances with our's,
For a space must be dim, as they gaze from the towers,
And strive to distinguish through tempest and gloom,
The prance of the steed, and the toss of the plume.

The rain is descending; the wind rises loud;
And the moon her red beacon has veil'd with a cloud;

'Tis better, my mates, for the warder's dull eye
Shall in confidence slumber, nor dream we are nigh.

Our steeds are impatient! I hear my blythe Grey!
There is life in his hoof-clang, and hope in his neigh;
Like the flash of a meteor, the glance of his mane
Shall marshal your march through the darkness and rain.

The drawbridge has dropp'd, the bugle has blown;
One pledge is to quaff yet—then mount and be gone!—
To their honour and peace, that shall rest with the slain;
To their health, and their glee, that see Teviot again!

THE

MONKS OF BANGOR'S MARCH.

AIR—"*Ymdaith Mionge.*"

Written for Mr GEORGE THOMSON'S Welch Melodies.

ETHELFRID, or OLFRID, king of Northumberland, having besieged Chester in 613, and BROCKMAEL, a British prince, advancing to relieve it, the religious of the neighbouring monastery of Bangor marched in procession, to pray for the success of their countrymen. But the British being totally defeated, the heathen victor put the monks to the sword, and destroyed their monastery. The tune to which these verses are adapted, is called the Monk's March, and is supposed to have been played at their ill-omened procession.

WHEN the heathen trumpet's clang
Round beleagur'd Chester rang,
Veiled nun and friar grey
March'd from Bangor's fair Abbaye:

High their holy anthem sounds,
Cestria's vale the hymn rebounds,
Floating down the sylvan Dee,
O miserere Domine!

On the long procession goes,
Glory round their crosses glows,
And the Virgin-mother mild
In their peaceful banner smiled;
Who could think such saintly band
Doom'd to feel unhallow'd hand?
Such was the divine decree,
O miserere Domine!

Bands that masses only sung,
Hands that censers only swung,
Met the northern bow and bill,
Heard the war-cry wild and shrill:
Woe to Brockmael's feeble hand,
Woe to Ofrid's bloody brand,

Woe to Saxon cruelty,

O miserere Domine!

Weltering amid warriors slain,
Spurn'd by steeds with bloody mane,
Slaughter'd down by heathen blade,
Bangor's peaceful monks are laid:
Word of parting rest unspoke,
Mass unsung, and bread unbroke;
For their souls for charity,

Sing O miserere Domine!

Bangor! o'er the murder wail,
Long the ruins told the tale,
Long recall'd the woeful march:*
Shatter'd towers and broken arch,

* William of Malmesbury says, that in his time the extent of the ruins of the monastery bore ample witness to the desolation occasioned by the massacre;—"tot semiruti parietes ecclesiarum, tot anfractus porticum, tanta turba ruderum quantum vix alibi cernas."

On thy shrine no tapers burn,
Never shall thy priests return;
The pilgrim sighs and sings for thee,
O miserere Domine!

FAREWELL TO THE MUSE.

Enchantress, farewell, who so oft has decoy'd me,
At the close of the evening through woodlands to roam,
Where the forester, lated, with wonder espied me
Explore the wild scenes he was quitting for home.
Farewell, and take with thee thy numbers wild speaking,
The language alternate of rapture and woe:
Oh! none but some lover, whose heart-strings are breaking,
The pang that I feel at our parting can know.

Each joy thou couldst double, and when there came sorrow,
Or pale disappointment to darken my way,
What voice was like thine, that could sing of to-morrow,
Till forgot in the strain was the grief of to-day!

But when friends drop around us in life's weary waning,
The grief, queen of numbers, thou canst not assuage;
Nor the gradual estrangement of those yet remaining,
The languor of pain, and the chillness of age.

'Twas thou that once taught me in accents bewailing,
To sing how a Warrior lay stretch'd on the plain,
And a Maiden hung o'er him with aid unavailing,
And held to his lips the cold goblet in vain;
As vain thy enchantments, O queen of wild numbers,
To a bard when the reign of his fancy is o'er,
And the quick pulse of feeling in apathy slumbers—
Farewell then—Enchantress!—I meet thee no more.

MISCELLANIES.

EPITAPH ON MRS ERSKINE.

PLAIN, as her native dignity of mind,
Arise the tomb of her we have resign'd:
Unflaw'd and stainless be the marble scroll,
Emblem of lovely form, and candid soul.
But, Oh! what symbol may avail, to tell
The kindness, wit, and sense, we lov'd so well!
What sculpture shew the broken ties of life,
Here buried, with the Parent, Friend, and Wife!
Or, on the tablet, stamp each title dear,
By which thine urn, EUPHEMIA, claims the tear!

Yet, taught, by thy meek sufferance, to assume
Patience in anguish, hope beyond the tomb,
Resign'd, though sad, this votive verse shall flow,
And brief, alas! as thy brief span below.

MR KEMBLE'S FAREWELL ADDRESS,

ON TAKING LEAVE OF THE EDINBURGH STAGE.

As the worn war-horse, at the trumpet's sound,
Erects his mane, and neighs, and paws the ground—
Disdains the ease his generous lord assigns,
And longs to rush on the embattled lines,
So I, your plaudits ringing on mine ear,
Can scarce sustain to think our parting near;
To think my scenic hour for ever past,
And that those valued plaudits are my last.
Why should we part, while still some powers remain,
That in your service strive not yet in vain?
Cannot high zeal the strength of youth supply,
And sense of duty fire the fading eye,

And all the wrongs of age remain subdued
Beneath the burning glow of gratitude?
Ah no! the taper, wearing to its close,
Oft for a space in fitful lustre glows;
But all too soon the transient gleam is past,
It cannot be renew'd, and will not last;
Even duty, zeal, and gratitude, can wage
But short-lived conflict with the frosts of age.
Yes! It were poor, remembering what I was,
To live a pensioner on your applause,
To drain the dregs of your endurance dry,
And take, as alms, the praise I once could buy,
Till every sneering youth around enquires,
"Is this the man who once could please our sires?"
And scorn assumes compassion's doubtful mien,
To warn me off from the encumber'd scene.
This must not be;—and higher duties crave
Some space between the theatre and the grave,
That like the Roman in the Capitol,
I may adjust my mantle ere I fall:

My life's brief act in public service flown,
The last, the closing scene, must be my own.

Here, then, adieu! while yet some well-graced parts
May fix an ancient favourite in your hearts,
Not quite to be forgotten, even when
You look on better actors, younger men:
And if your bosoms own this kindly debt
Of old remembrance, how shall mine forget—
O, how forget!—how oft I hither came
In anxious hope, how oft return'd with fame!
How oft around your circle this weak hand
Has waved immortal Shakespeare's magic wand,
Till the full burst of inspiration came,
And I have felt, and you have fann'd, the flame!
By mem'ry treasured, while her reign endures,
Those hours must live—and all their charms are yours.

O favour'd Land! renown'd for arts and arms,
For manly talent and for female charms,

Could this full bosom prompt the sinking line,
What fervent benedictions now were thine!
But my last part is play'd, my knell is rung,
When e'en your praise falls faultering from my tongue;
And all that you can hear, or I can tell,
Is—Friends and Patrons, hail, and FARE YOU WELL!

ON ETTRICK FOREST'S MOUNTAINS DUN.*

On Ettrick Forest's mountains dun,
'Tis blythe to hear the sportsman's gun,
And seek the heath-frequenting brood
Far through the noon-day solitude;
By many a cairn and trenched mound,
Where chiefs of yore sleep lone and sound,
And springs, where grey-hair'd shepherds tell,
That still the fairies love to dwell.

Along the silver streams of Tweed,
'Tis blythe the mimic fly to lead,

* Written after a week's shooting and fishing, in which the poet had been engaged with some friends.

When to the hook the salmon springs,
And the line whistles through the rings;
The boiling eddy see him try,
Then dashing from the current high,
Till watchful eye and cautious hand
Have led his wasted strength to land.

'Tis blythe along the midnight tide,
With stalwart arm the boat to guide;
On high the dazzling blaze to rear,
And heedful plunge the barbed spear;
Rock, wood, and scaur, emerging bright,
Fling on the stream their ruddy light,
And from the bank our band appears
Like Genii, armed with fiery spears.

'Tis blythe at eve to tell the tale,
How we succeed, and how we fail,

Whether at ALWYN's * lordly meal,
Or lowlier board of ASHESTEEL; †
While the gay tapers cheerly shine,
Bickers the fire, and flows the wine—
Days free from thought, and nights from care,
My blessing on the Forest fair!

---

* *Alwyn*, the seat of the Lord Somerville, now, alas! untenanted, by the lamented death of that kind and hospitable nobleman, the author's nearest neighbour and intimate friend.

† *Ashesteel*, the poet's residence at that time.

THE

SEARCH AFTER HAPPINESS;

OR,

THE QUEST OF SULTAUN SOLIMAUN.

Written in 1817.

O, FOR a glance of that gay Muse's eye,
That lighten'd on Bandello's laughing tale,
And twinkled with a lustre shrewd and sly
When Giam Battista bade her vision hail!*
Yet fear not, ladies, the *naive* detail

* The hint of the following tale is taken from *La Camiscia Magica*, a novel of Giam Battista Casti.

Given by the natives of that land canorous;
Italian licence loves to leap the pale,
We Britons have the fear of shame before us,
And, if not wise in mirth, at least must be decorous.

II.

In the far eastern clime, no great while since,
Lived Sultaun Solimaun, a mighty prince,
Whose eyes, as oft as they perform'd their round,
Beheld all others fix'd upon the ground;
Whose ears receiv'd the same unvaried phrase,
"Sultaun! thy vassal hears, and he obeys!"—
All have their tastes—this may the fancy strike
Of such grave folks as pomp and grandeur like;
For me, I love the honest heart and warm
Of Monarch who can amble round his farm,
Or, when the toil of state no more annoys,
In chimney corner seek domestic joys—

I love a Prince will bid the bottle pass,
Exchanging with his subjects glance and glass;
In fitting time, can, gayest of the gay,
Keep up the jest and mingle in the lay—
Such Monarchs best our free-born humours suit,
But Despots must be stately, stern, and mute

III.

This Solimaun, Serendib had in sway—
And where's Serendib? may some critic say.—
Good lack, mine honest friend, consult the chart,
Scare not my Pegasus before I start!
If Rennell has it not, you'll find, mayhap,
The isle laid down in Captain Sindbad's map—
Famed mariner! whose merciless narrations
Drove every friend and kinsman out of patience,
Till, fain to find a guest who thought them shorter,
He deign'd to tell them over to a porter—

The last edition see by Long. and Co.,
Rees, Hurst, and Orme, our fathers in the Row.

IV.

Serendib found, deem not my tale a fiction—
This Sultaun, whether lacking contradiction—
(A sort of stimulant which hath its uses,
To raise the spirits and reform the juices,
Sovereign specific for all sorts of cures
In my wife's practice, and perhaps in yours,)
The Sultaun lacking this same wholesome bitter,
Or cordial smooth for prince's palate fitter—
Or if some Mollah had hag-rid his dreams
With Degial, Ginnistan, and such wild themes
Belonging to the Mollah's subtle craft,
I wot not—but the Sultaun never laugh'd,
Scarce ate or drank, and took a melancholy
That scorn'd all remedy profane or holy;

In his long list of melancholics, mad,
Or mazed, or dumb, hath Burton none so bad.

V.

Physicians soon arrived, sage, ware, and tried,
As e'er scrawl'd jargon in a darken'd room;
With heedful glance the Sultaun's tongue they eyed,
Peep'd in his bath, and God knows where beside,
And then in solemn accents spoke their doom,
" His majesty is very far from well."
Then each to work with his specific fell:
The Hakim Ibrahim *instanter* brought
His unguent Mahazzim al Zerdukkaut,
While Roompot, a practitioner more wily,
Relied on his Munaskif al fillfily.*

---

* For these hard words see D'Herbelot, or the learned Editor of the Recipes of Avicenna.

More and yet more in deep array appear,
And some the front assail and some the rear;
Their remedies to reinforce and vary,
Came surgeon eke, and eke apothecary;
Till the tired Monarch, though of words grown chary,
Yet dropt to recompense their fruitless labour,
Some hint about a bowstring or a sabre.
There lack'd, I promise you, no longer speeches,
To rid the palace of those learned leeches.

VI.

Then was the council call'd—by their advice,
(They deem'd the matter ticklish all, and nice,
And sought to shift it off from their own shoulders)
Tatars and couriers in all speed were sent,
To call a sort of Eastern parliament
Of feudatory chieftains and freeholders—
Such have the Persians at this very day,

My gallant Malcolm calls them *couroultai*;*
I'm not prepared to show in this slight song
That to Serendib the same forms belong,—
E'en let the learn'd go search, and tell me if I'm wrong.

VII.

The Omrahs,† each with hand on scymitar,
Gave, like Sempronius, still their voice for war—
" The sabre of the Sultaun in its sheath
Too long has slept, nor own'd the work of death;
Let the Tambourgi bid his signal rattle,
Bang the loud gong and raise the shout of battle!
This dreary cloud that dims our sovereign's day,
Shall from his kindled bosom flit away,
When the bold Lootie wheels his courser round,
And the arm'd elephant shall shake the ground.

---

* See Sir John Malcolm's admirable History of Persia.

† Nobility.

Each noble pants to own the glorious summons—
And for the charges—Lo ! your faithful Commons !"
The Riots who attended in their places
(Serendib-language calls a farmer Riot)
Look'd ruefully in one another's faces,
From this oration auguring much disquiet,
Double assessment, forage, and free quarters ;
And fearing these as China-men the Tartars,
Or as the whisker'd vermin fear the mousers,
Each fumbled in the pocket of his trowsers.

VIII.

And next came forth the reverend Convocation,
Bald heads, white beards, and many a turban green ;
Imaum and Mollah there of every station,
Santon, Fakir, and Calendar were seen.
Their votes were various—some advised a Mosque
With fitting revenues should be erected,

With seemly gardens and with gay Kiosque,
To recreate a band of priests selected.
Others opined that through the realms a dole
Be made to holy men, whose prayers might profit
The Sultaun's weal in body and in soul;
But their long-headed chief, the Sheik Ul-Sofit,
More closely touch'd the point;—"Thy studious mood,"
Quoth he, "O Prince! hath thicken'd all thy blood,
And dull'd thy brain with labour beyond measure;
Wherefore relax a space and take thy pleasure,
And toy with beauty or tell o'er thy treasure;
From all the cares of state, my liege, enlarge thee,
And leave the burthen to thy faithful clergy."

IX.

These counsels sage availed not a whit,
And so the patient (as is not uncommon
Where grave physicians lose their time and wit)
Resolved to take advice of an old woman;

His mother she, a dame who once was beauteous,
And still was call'd so by each subject duteous.
Now, whether Fatima was witch in earnest,
Or only made believe, I cannot say—
But she profess'd to cure disease the sternest,
By dint of magic amulet or lay;
And, when all other skill in vain was shown,
She deem'd it fitting time to use her own.

X.

" *Sympathia magica* hath wonders done,"
(Thus did old Fatima bespeak her son,)
" It works upon the fibres and the pores,
And thus, insensibly, our health restores,
And it must help us here.—Thou must endure
The ill, my son, or travel for the cure.
Search land and sea, and get, where'er you can,
The inmost vesture of a happy man,

I mean his SHIRT, my son, which, taken warm
And fresh from off his back, shall chase your harm,
Bid every current of your veins rejoice,
And your dull heart leap light as shepherd boy's."
Such was the counsel from his mother came.
I know not if she had some under-game,
As Doctors have, who bid their patients roam
And live abroad, when sure to die at home;
Or if she thought, that, somehow or another,
Queen Regent sounded better than Queen Mother;
But, says the Chronicle, (who will go look it,)
That such was her advice—the Sultaun took it.

XI.

All are on board—the Sultaun and his train,
In gilded galley prompt to plough the main:
The old Rais* was the first who question'd, "Whither?"

* Master of the vessel.

They paused—" Arabia," thought the pensive Prince,
" Was call'd the Happy many ages since—
For Mokha, Rais."—And they came safely thither.
But not in Araby with all her balm,
Not where Judæa weeps beneath her palm,
Not in rich Egypt, not in Nubian waste,
Could there the step of happiness be traced.
One Copt alone profess'd to have seen her smile,
When Bruce his goblet fill'd at infant Nile:
She bless'd the dauntless traveller as he quaff'd,
But vanish'd from him with the ended draught.

XII.

" Enough of turbans," said the weary King,
" These dolimans of ours are not the thing;
Try we the Giaours, these men of coat and cap, I
Incline to think some of them must be happy;
At least they have as fair a cause as any can,
They drink good wine and keep no Ramazan.

Then northward, ho!" The vessel cuts the sea,
And fair Italia lies upon her lee.—
But fair Italia, she who once unfurl'd
Her eagle banners o'er a conquer'd world,
Long from her throne of domination tumbled,
Lay, by her quondam vassals, sorely humbled;
The Pope himself look'd pensive, pale, and lean,
And was not half the man he once had been.
" While these the priest and those the noble fleeces,
Our poor old boot," * they said, " is torn to pieces.
Its tops † the vengeful claws of Austria feel,
And the Great Devil is rending toe and heel.‡
If happiness you seek, to tell you truly,
We think she dwells with one Giovanni Bulli;
A tramontane, a heretic,—the buck,
Poffaredio! still has all the luck;

---

* The well-known resemblance of Italy in the map.

† Florence, Venice, &c.

‡ The Calabrias, infested by bands of assassins. One of the leaders was called Fra Diavolo, *i. e.* Brother Devil.

By land or ocean never strikes his flag—
And then—a perfect walking money-bag."
Off set our Prince to seek John Bull's abode,
But first took France—it lay upon the road.

XIII.

Monsieur Baboon, after much late commotion,
Was agitated like a settling ocean,
Quite out of sorts, and could not tell what ail'd him,
Only the glory of his house had fail'd him;
Besides, some tumours on his noddle biding,
Gave indication of a recent hiding.*
Our Prince, though Sultauns of such things are heedless,
Thought it a thing indelicate and needless
To ask, if at that moment he was happy.
And Monsieur, seeing that he was *comme il faut*, a
Loud voice muster'd up, for "*Vive le Roi!*"
Then whisper'd, "Ave you any news of Nappy?"

* Or drubbing, so called in the Slang Dictionary.

The Sultaun answer'd him with a cross question,—
" Pray can you tell me aught of one John Bull,
That dwells somewhere beyond your herring-pool ?"
The query seem'd of difficult digestion !
The party shrugg'd, and grinn'd, and took his snuff,
And found his whole good breeding scarce enough.

XIV.

Twitching his visage into as many puckers
As damsels wont to put into their tuckers,
(Ere liberal Fashion damn'd both lace and lawn,
And bade the veil of modesty be drawn,)
Replied the Frenchman after a brief pause,
" Jean Bool !—I vas not know him—yes, I vas—
I vas remember dat von year or two,
I saw him at von place call'd Vaterloo—
Ma foi ! il s'est tres joliment battu,
Dat is for Englishman,—m' entendez vous ?
But den he had wit him one damm son-gun,
Rogue I no like—dey call him Vellinton."

Monsieur's politeness could not hide his fret,
So Solimaun took leave and cross'd the streight.

XV.

John Bull was in his very worst of moods,
Raving of sterile farms and unsold goods;
His sugar-loaves and bales about he threw,
And on his counter beat the Devil's tattoo.
His wars were ended, and the victory won,
But then 'twas reckoning-day with honest John,
And authors vouch 'twas still this Worthy's way,
" Never to grumble till he came to pay;
And then he always thinks, his temper's such,
The work too little, and the pay too much."*
Yet, grumbler as he is, so kind and hearty,
That when his mortal foe was on the floor,
And past the power to harm his quiet more,
Poor John had well nigh wept for Buonaparte!
Such was the wight whom Solimaun salam'd,—
" And who are you," John answer'd, " and be d—d?"

* See the True-Born Englishman, by Daniel De Foe.

XVI.

" A stranger, come to see the happiest man,—
So, Seignior, all avouch,—in Frangistan."—*
" Happy ? my tenants breaking on my hand ;
Unstock'd my pastures, and untill'd my land ;
Sugar and rum a drug, and mice and moths
The sole consumers of my good broad cloths—
Happy ?—why, cursed war and racking tax
Have left us scarcely raiment to our backs."
" In that case, Seignior, I may take my leave ;
I came to ask a favour—but I grieve"——
" Favour ?" said John, and eyed the Sultaun hard,
" It's my belief you came to break the yard !—
But, stay, you look like some poor foreign sinner,—
Take that, to buy yourself a shirt and dinner."
With that he chuck'd a guinea at his head ;
But, with due dignity, the Sultaun said,—
" Permit me, sir, your bounty to decline ;
A *shirt* indeed I seek, but none of thine.

* Europe.

Seignior, I kiss your hands, so fare you well."
" Kiss and be d——d," quoth John, " and go to hell!"

XVII.

Next door to John there dwelt his sister Peg,
Once a wild lass as ever shook a leg
When the blithe bagpipe blew—but soberer now,
She *doucely* span her flax and milk'd her cow.
And whereas erst she was a needy slattern,
Nor now of wealth or cleanliness a pattern,
Yet once a-month her house was partly swept,
And once a-week a plenteous board she kept.
And whereas eke the vixen used her claws,
And teeth, of yore, on slender provocation,
She now was grown amenable to laws,
A quiet soul as any in the nation;
The sole remembrance of her warlike joys
Was in old songs she sang to please her boys.
John Bull, whom, in their years of early strife,
She wont to lead a cat-and-doggish life,

Now found the woman, as he said, a neighbour,
Who look'd to the main chance, declined no labour,
Loved a long grace and spoke a northern jargon,
And was d——d close in making of a bargain.

XVII.

The Sultaun enter'd, and he made his leg,
And with decorum curtsied sister Peg;
(She loved a book, and knew a thing or two,
And guess'd at once with whom she had to do.)
She bade him "sit into the fire," and took
Her dram, her cake, her kebbock from the nook;
Ask'd him about the news from eastern parts;
And of her absent bairns, puir Highland hearts!
If peace brought down the price of tea and pepper,
And if the *nitmugs* were grown *ony* cheaper;—
Were there nae *speerings* of our Mungo Park—
Ye'll be the gentleman that wants the sark?
If ye wad buy a web o' auld wife's spinning,
I'll warrant ye it's a weel-wearing linen."

Then up got Peg, and round the house gan scuttle,
In search of goods her customer to nail,
Until the Sultaun strain'd his princely throttle,
And hollow'd,—" Ma'am, that is not what I ail.
Pray, are you happy, ma'am, in this snug glen ?"
" Happy ?" said Peg ; " What for d'ye want to ken ?
Besides, just think upon this by-gane year,
Grain wadna pay the yoking of the pleugh."
" What say you to the present ?"—" Meal's sae dear,
To make their *brose* my bairns have scarce aneugh."
" The devil take the shirt," said Solimaun,
" I thing my quest will end as it began.
Farewell, ma'am ; nay, no ceremony, I beg"——
" Ye'll no be for the linen then ?" said Peg.

XX.

Now, for the land of verdant Erin
The Sultaun's royal bark is steering,
The emerald Isle where honest Paddy dwells,
The cousin of John Bull, as story tells.

For a long space had John, with words of thunder,
Hard looks, and harder knocks, kept Paddy under,
Till the poor lad, like boy that's flogg'd unduly,
Had gotten somewhat restive and unruly.
Hard was his lot and lodging, you'll allow,
A wigwam that would hardly serve a sow;
His landlord, and of middlemen two brace,
Had screw'd his rent up to the starving place;
His garment was a top-coat, and an old one;
His meal was a potatoe, and a cold one;
But still for fun or frolic, and all that,
In the round world was not the match of Pat.

XXI.

The Sultaun saw him on a holiday,
Which is with Paddy still a jolly day:
When mass is ended, and his load of sins
Confess'd, and Mother Church hath from her binns
Dealt forth a bonus of imputed merit,
Then is Pat's time for fancy, whim, and spirit!

To jest, to sing, to caper fair and free,
And dance as light as leaf upon the tree.
" By Mahomet," said Sultaun Solimaun,
" That ragged fellow is our very man !
Rush in and seize him—do not do him hurt,
But, will he nill he, let me have his *shirt*."—

XXII.

Shilela their plan was well nigh after baulking,
(Much less provocation will set it a-walking,)
But the odds that foil'd Hercules foil'd Paddy Whack ;
They seized, and they floor'd, and they stripp'd him—
Alack !
Up-bubboo ! Paddy had not——a shirt to his back ! ! !
And the King, disappointed, with sorrow and shame,
Went back to Serendib as sad as he came.

EPILOGUE

TO

THE APPEAL,

SPOKEN BY MRS. H. SIDDONS.

A CAT of yore (or else old Æsop lied)
Was changed into a fair and blooming bride,
But spied a mouse upon her marriage day,
Forgot her spouse and seiz'd upon her prey;
Even thus my bridegroom lawyer, as you saw,
Threw off poor me and pounc'd upon papa.
His neck from Hymen's mystic knot made loose,
He twisted round my sire's the literal noose.
Such are the fruits of our dramatic labour
Since the New Jail became our next door neighbour.*

* It is necessary to mention, that the allusions in this piece are all local, and addressed only to the Edinburgh audience. The new prisons of the city, on the Calton Hill, are not far from the Theatre.

Yes, times *are* changed, for in your fathers' age
The lawyers were the patrons of the stage;
However high advanced by future fate,
There stands the bench (*points to the Pit*) that first
receiv'd their weight.
The future legal sage, 'twas ours to see,
Doom though unwigg'd, and plead without a fee.

But now astounding each poor mimic elf,
Instead of lawyers comes the Law herself,
Tremendous neighbour! On our right she dwells,
Builds high her towers and excavates her cells;
While on the left, she agitates the town
With the tempestuous question, Up or down?*

---

* At this time the public of Edinburgh was much agitated by a law-suit betwixt the magistrates and many of the inhabitants of the city, concerning the range of new buildings on the western side of the North Bridge; which the latter insisted should be removed as a deformity.

'Twixt Scylla and Charybdis thus stand we,
Law's final end and law's uncertainty.
But soft! who lives at Rome the Pope must flatter,
And jails and lawsuits are no jesting matter.
Then—just farewell! we wait with serious awe
Till your applause or censure gives the law,
Trusting our humble efforts may assure ye,
We hold you Court and Counsel, Judge and Jury.

THE

BRIDAL OF TRIERMAIN;

OR,

THE VALE OF ST JOHN.

A LOVER'S TALE.

An elf-quene wol I love ywis,
For in this world no woman is
Worthy to be my make in toun:
All other women I forsake,
And to an elf-quene I me take
By dale and eke by doun.

RIME OF SIR THOPAS.

PREFACE.

In the Edinburgh Annual Register for the year 1809, three Fragments were inserted, written in imitation of Living Poets. It must have been apparent, that by these prolusions, nothing burlesque, or disrespectful to the authors, was intended, but that they were offered to the public as serious, though certainly very imperfect, imitations of that style of composition, by which each of the writers is supposed to be distinguished. As these exercises attracted a greater degree of attention than the author anticipated, he has been induced to complete one of them, and present it as a separate publication.

It is not in this place that an examination of the works of the master whom he has here adopted as his model, can, with propriety, be introduced; since his general acquiescence in the favourable suffrage of the public must necessarily be inferred from the attempt he has now made. He is induced by the nature of his subject, to offer a few remarks on what has been called ROMANTIC POETRY;—the popularity of which has been revived in the present day, under the auspices, and by the unparalleled success, of one individual.

The original purpose of poetry is either religious or historical, or, as must frequently happen, a mixture of both. To modern readers, the poems of Homer have many of the features of pure romance; but in the estimation of his contemporaries, they probably derived their chief value from their supposed historical authenticity. The same may be generally said of the poetry of all early ages.

The marvels and miracles which the poet blends with his song, do not exceed in number or extravagance the figments of the historians of the same period of society; and, indeed, the difference betwixt poetry and prose, as the vehicles of historical truth, is always of late introduction. Poets, under various denominations of Bards, Scalds, Chroniclers, and so forth, are the first historians of all nations. Their intention is to relate the events they have witnessed, or the traditions that have reached them; and they clothe the relation in rhyme, merely as the means of rendering it more solemn in the narrative, or more easily committed to memory. But as the poetical historian improves in the art of conveying information, the authenticity of his narrative unavoidably declines. He is tempted to dilate and dwell upon the events that are interesting to his imagination, and, conscious how indifferent his audience is to the

naked truth of his poem, his history gradually becomes a romance.

It is in this situation that those epics are found which have been generally regarded the standards of poetry; and it has happened somewhat strangely, that the moderns have pointed out as the characteristics and peculiar excellencies of narrative poetry, the very circumstances which the authors themselves adopted, only because their art involved the duties of the historian as well as the poet. It cannot be believed, for example, that Homer selected the siege of Troy as the most appropriate subject for poetry; his purpose was to write the early history of his country: the event he has chosen, though not very fruitful in varied incident, nor perfectly well adapted for poetry, was nevertheless combined with traditionary and genealogical anecdotes extremely interesting to those who were to listen to him; and this he has adorned by the exer-

tions of a genius, which, if it has been equalled, has certainly been never surpassed. It was not till comparatively a late period that the general accuracy of his narrative, or his purpose in composing it, was brought into question. Δοκει πρωτος ὁ Αναξαγορας (καθα φησι Φαβορινος εν παντοδαπῃ Ἱστορια) την Ὁμηρε ποιησιν αποφηνασθαι ειναν αρετης και δικαοσυνης.[1] But whatever theories might be framed by speculative men, his work was of an historical, not of an allegorical nature. Εναυλιλλετο μετα τε Μενετεως, και ὁπε εκαστοτε αφικοιτο, παντα τα επιχωρια διερωτατο, και ἱστορευων επυνθανετο. εικος δε μιν ην και μνημοσυνα παντων γραφεσθαι.[2] Instead of recommending the choice of a subject similar to that of Homer, it was to be expected that critics should have exhorted the poets of these later days to adopt or invent a

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[1] Diogenes Laertius, l. 11, p. 8.

[2] Homeri Vita.

narrative in itself more susceptible of poetical ornament, and to avail themselves of that advantage in order to compensate, in some degree, the inferiority of genius. The contrary course has been inculcated by almost all the writers upon the *Epopœia;* with what success, the fate of Homer's numerous imitators may best shew. The *ultimum supplicium* of criticism was inflicted on the author if he did not chuse a subject which at once deprived him of all claim to originality, and placed him, if not in actual contest, at least in fatal comparison, with those giants in the land, whom it was most his interest to avoid. The celebrated receipt for writing an epic poem, which appeared in the Guardian, was the first instance in which common sense was applied to this department of poetry; and indeed, if the question be considered on its own merits, we must be satisfied that narrative poetry, if strictly confined to the great occurrences of

history, would be deprived of the individual interest which it is so well calculated to excite.

Modern poets may therefore be pardoned in seeking simpler subjects of verse, more interesting in proportion to their simplicity. Two or three figures, well grouped, suit the artist better than a crowd, for whatever purpose assembled. For the same reason, a scene immediately presented to the imagination, and directly brought home to the feelings, though involving the fate but of one or two persons, is more favourable for poetry than the political struggles and convulsions which influence the fate of kingdoms. The former are within the reach and comprehension of all, and, if depicted with vigour, seldom fail to fix attention: The other, if more sublime, are more vague and distant, less capable of being distinctly understood, and infinitely less capable of exciting those sentiments which

it is the very purpose of poetry to inspire. To generalize is always to destroy effect. We would, for example, be more interested in the fate of an individual soldier in combat, than in the grand event of a general action; with the happiness of two lovers raised from misery and anxiety to peace and union, than with the successful exertions of a whole nation. From what causes this may originate, is a separate and obviously an immaterial consideration. Before ascribing this peculiarity to causes decidedly and odiously selfish, it is proper to recollect, that while men see only a limited space, and while their affections and conduct are regulated, not by aspiring at an universal good, but by exerting their power of making themselves and others happy within the limited scale allotted to each individual, so long will individual history and individual virtue be the readier and more accessible road to general interest and attention; and perhaps we

may add, that it is the more useful, as well as the more accessible, in as much as it affords an example capable of being easily imitated.

According to the author's idea of Romantic Poetry, as distinguished from Epic, the former comprehends a fictitious narrative, framed and combined at the pleasure of the writer; beginning and ending as he may judge best; which neither exacts nor refuses the use of supernatural machinery; which is free from the technical rules of the *Epée;* and is subject only to those which good sense, good taste, and good morals, apply to every species of poetry without exception. The date may be in a remote age, or in the present; the story may detail the adventures of a prince or of a peasant. In a word, the author is absolute master of his country and its inhabitants, and every thing is permitted to him, excepting to be heavy or prosaic, for which, free and unembarrassed as he is, he

has no manner of apology. Those, it is probable, will be found the peculiarities of this species of composition; and, before joining the outcry against the vitiated taste that fosters and encourages it, the justice and grounds of it ought to be made perfectly apparent. If the want of sieges and battles and great military evolutions in our poetry is complained of, let us reflect, that the campaigns and heroes of our days are perpetuated in a record that neither requires nor admits of the aid of fiction; and if the complaint refers to the inferiority of our bards, let us pay a just tribute to their modesty, limiting them, as it does, to subjects, which, however indifferently treated, have still the interest and charm of novelty, and which thus prevents them from adding insipidity to their other more insuperable defects.

THE

BRIDAL OF TRIERMAIN.

INTRODUCTION.

I.

Come, Lucy! while 'tis morning hour,
  The woodland brook we needs must pass;
So, ere the sun assume his power,
We shelter in our poplar bower,
Where dew lies long upon the flower,
  Though vanish'd from the velvet grass.
Curbing the stream, this stony ridge
May serve us for a sylvan bridge;
  For here, compell'd to disunite,
    Round petty isles the runnels glide,

And chafing off their puny spite,
The shallow murmurers waste their might,
Yielding to footstep free and light
A dry-shod pass from side to side.

II.

Nay, why this hesitating pause?
And, Lucy, as thy step withdraws,
Why sidelong eye the streamlet's brim?
Titania's foot without a slip,
Like thine, though timid, light, and slim,
From stone to stone might safely trip,
Nor risk the glow-worm clasp to dip
That binds her slipper's silken rim.
Or trust thy lover's strength: nor fear
That this same stalwart arm of mine,
Which could yon oak's prone trunk uprear,
Shall shrink beneath the burthen dear
Of form so slender, light, and fine.—
So,—now, the danger dared at last,
Look back and smile at perils past!

III.

And now we reach the favourite glade,
Paled in by copse-wood, cliff, and stone,
Where never harsher sounds invade,
To break affection's whispering tone,
Than the deep breeze that waves the shade,
Than the small brooklet's feeble moan.
Come! rest thee on thy wonted seat;
Moss'd is the stone, the turf is green,
A place where lovers best may meet,
Who would not that their love be seen.
The boughs, that dim the summer sky,
Shall hide us from each lurking spy,
That fain would spread the invidious tale,
How Lucy of the lofty eye,
Noble in birth, in fortunes high,
She for whom lords and barons sigh,
Meets her poor Arthur in the dale.

IV.

How deep that blush!—how deep that sigh!
And why does Lucy shun mine eye?—

Is it because that crimson draws
Its colour from some secret cause,
Some hidden movement of the breast,
She would not that her Arthur guess'd?
O! quicker far is lovers' ken
Than the dull glance of common men,
And, by strange sympathy, can spell
The thoughts the loved one will not tell!
And mine, in Lucy's blush, saw met
The hue of pleasure and regret;
Pride mingled in the sigh her voice,
And shared with Love the crimson glow,
Well pleased that thou art Arthur's choice,
Yet shamed thine own is placed so low.
Thou turn'st thy self-confessing cheek,
As if to meet the breeze's cooling;
Then, Lucy, hear thy tutor speak,
For Love, too, has his hours of schooling.

V.

Too oft my anxious eye has spied
That secret grief thou fain would'st hide,

The passing pang of humbled pride:
Too oft, when through the splendid hall,
The load-star of each heart and eye,
My fair one leads the glittering ball,
Will her stol'n glance on Arthur fall,
With such a blush and such a sigh!
Thou would'st not yield, for wealth or rank,
The heart thy worth and beauty won,
Nor leave me on this mossy bank,
To meet a rival on a throne:
Why, then, should vain repinings rise,
That to thy lover fate denies
A nobler name, a wide domain,
A Baron's birth, a menial train,
Since heaven assign'd him, for his part,
A lyre, a faulchion, and a heart?

VI.

My sword——its master must be dumb;
But, when a soldier names my name,

Approach, my Lucy! fearless come,
Nor dread to hear of Arthur's shame.
My heart—'mid all yon courtly crew,
Of lordly rank and lofty line,
Is there to love and honour true,
That boasts a pulse so warm as mine?
They praised thy diamonds' lustre rare—
Match'd with thine eyes, I thought it faded;
They praised the pearls that bound thy hair—
I only saw the locks they braided;
They talk'd of wealthy dower and land,
And titles of high birth the token—
I thought of Lucy's heart and hand,
Nor knew the sense of what was spoken.
And yet, if rank'd in Fortune's roll,
I might have learn'd their choice unwise,
Who rate the dower above the soul,
And Lucy's diamonds o'er her eyes.

VII.

My lyre—it is an idle toy,
That borrows accents not its own,
Like warbler of Columbian sky,
That sings but in a mimic tone.*
Ne'er did it sound o'er sainted well,
Nor boasts it aught of Border spell;
Its strings no feudal slogan pour,
Its heroes draw no broad claymore;
No shouting clans applauses raise,
Because it sung their fathers' praise;
On Scottish moor, or English down,
It ne'er was graced with fair renown;
Nor won,—best meed to minstrel true,—
One favouring smile from fair Buccleuch!
By one poor streamlet sounds its tone,
And heard by one dear Maid alone.

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* The Mocking Bird.

VIII.

But, if thou bid'st, these tones shall tell,
Of errant knight and damozelle;
Of the dread knot a Wizard tied,
In punishment of maiden's pride,
In notes of marvel and of fear,
That best may charm romantic ear.
For Lucy loves,—like Collins, ill-starr'd name!
Whose lay's requital was, that tardy fame,
Who bound no laurel round his living head,
Should hang it o'er his monument when dead,—
For Lucy loves to tread enchanted strand,
And thread, like him, the maze of Fairy-land;
Of golden battlements to view the gleam,
And slumber soft by some Elysian stream:
Such lays she loves,—and, such my Lucy's choice,
What other song can claim her Poet's voice?

THE

BRIDAL OF TRIERMAIN.

CANTO FIRST.

THE

BRIDAL OF TRIERMAIN.

CANTO FIRST.

Where is the Maiden of mortal strain,
That may match with the Baron of Triermain?
She must be lovely and constant and kind,
Holy and pure and humble of mind,
Blithe of cheer and gentle of mood,
Courteous and generous and noble of blood—
Lovely as the sun's first ray,
When it breaks the clouds of an April day;
Constant and true as the widow'd dove,
Kind as a minstrel that sings of love;
Pure as the fountain in rocky cave,
Where never sun-beam kiss'd the wave;

Humble as maiden that loves in vain,
Holy as hermit's vesper strain;
Gentle as breeze that but whispers and dies,
Yet blithe as the light leaves that dance in its sighs;
Courteous as monarch the morn he is crown'd,
Generous as spring-dews that bless the glad ground;
Noble her blood as the currents that met
In the veins of the noblest Plantagenet—
Such must her form be, her mood and her strain,
That shall match with Sir Roland of Triermain.

II.

Sir Roland de Vaux he hath laid him to sleep,
His blood it was fever'd, his breathing was deep
He had been pricking against the Scot,
The foray was long and the skirmish hot;
His dinted helm and his buckler's plight
Bore token of a stubborn fight.
All in the castle must hold them still,
Harpers must lull him to his rest,
With the slow soft tunes he loves the best,

Till sleep sink down upon his breast,
Like the dew on a summer-hill.

III.

It was the dawn of an autumn day;
The sun was struggling with frost-fog grey,
That like a silvery crape was spread
Round Skiddaw's dim and distant head,
And faintly gleam'd each painted pane
Of the lordly halls of Triermain,
When that Baron bold awoke.
Starting he woke, and loudly did call,
Rousing his menials in bower and hall,
While hastily he spoke.

IV.

"Hearken, my minstrels! Which of ye all
Touch'd his harp with that dying fall,
So sweet, so soft, so faint,
It seem'd an angel's whisper'd call
To an expiring saint?

And hearken, my merrymen! What time or where
Did she pass, that maid with her heavenly brow,
With her look so sweet and her eyes so fair,
And her graceful step and her angel air,
And the eagle-plume in her dark-brown hair,
That pass'd from my bower e'en now?"—

V.

Answer'd him Richard de Brettville; he
Was chief of the Baron's minstrelsy,—
"Silent, noble Chieftain, we
Have sate since midnight close,
When such lulling sounds as the brooklet sings,
Murmur'd from our melting strings,
And hush'd you to repose.
Had a harp-note sounded here,
It had caught my watchful ear,
Although it fell as faint and shy
As bashful maiden's half-form'd sigh,
When she thinks her lover near."—
Answer'd Philip of Fasthwaite tall,
He kept guard in the outer-hall,—

" Since at eve our watch took post,
Not a foot has thy portal cross'd;
Else had I heard the steps, though low
And light they fell as when earth receives,
In morn of frost, the wither'd leaves,
That drop when no winds blow."—

VI.

" Then come thou hither, Henry, my page,
Whom I saved from the sack of Hermitage,
When that dark castle, tower, and spire,
Rose to the skies a pile of fire,
And redden'd all the Nine-stane Hill,
And the shrieks of death, that wildly broke
Through devouring flame and smothering-smoke,
Made the warrior's heart-blood chill!
The trustiest thou of all my train,
My fleetest courser thou must rein,
And ride to Lyulph's tower,
And from the Baron of Triermain
Greet well that Sage of power.

He is sprung from Druid sires,
And British bards that tuned their lyres
To Arthur's and Pendragon's praise,
And his who sleeps at Dunmailraise.
Gifted like his gifted race,
He the characters can trace,
Graven deep in elder time
Upon Helvellyn's cliffs sublime;
Sign and sigil well doth he know,
And can bode of weal and woe,
Of kingdoms' fall, and fate of wars,
From mystic dreams and course of stars.
He shall tell if middle earth
To that enchanting shape gave birth,
Or if 'twas but an airy thing,
Such as fantastic slumbers bring,
Framed from the rain-bow's varying dyes,
Or fading tints of western skies.
For, by the blessed rood I swear,
If that fair form breathe vital air,

No other maiden by my side
Shall ever rest De Vaux's bride!"—

VII.

The faithful Page he mounts his steed,
And soon he cross'd green Irthing's mead,
Dash'd o'er Kirkoswald's verdant plain,
And Eden barr'd his course in vain.
He pass'd red Penrith's Table Round,
For feats of chivalry renown'd,
Left Mayburgh's mound and stones of power,
By druids raised in magic hour,
And traced the Eamont's winding way,
Till Ulfo's lake beneath him lay.

VIII.

Onward he rode, the path-way still
Winding betwixt the lake and hill;
Till on the fragment of a rock,
Struck from its base by lightning shock,

He saw the hoary Sage:
The silver moss and lichen twined,
With fern and deer-hair check'd and lined,
A cushion fit for age;
And o'er him shook the aspin tree,
A restless rustling canopy.
Then sprung young Henry from his selle,
And greeted Lyulph grave,
And then his master's tale did tell,
And then for counsel crave.
The Man of Years mused long and deep,
Of time's lost treasures taking keep,
And then, as rousing from a sleep,
His solemn answer gave.

IX.

" That Maid is born of middle earth,
And may of man be won,
Though there have glided since her birth,
Five hundred years and one.

But where's the Knight in all the north,
That dare the adventure follow forth,
So perilous to knightly worth,
In the Valley of St John?
Listen, youth, to what I tell,
And bind it on thy memory well;
Nor muse that I commence the rhyme
Far distant mid the wrecks of time.
The mystic tale, by bard and sage,
Is handed down from Merlin's age.

X.

Lyulph's Tale.

KING ARTHUR has ridden from merry Carlisle,
When Pentecost was o'er;
He journey'd like errant knight the while,
And sweetly the summer sun did smile
On mountain, moss, and moor.
Above his solitary track
Rose Glaramara's ridgy back,

Amid whose yawning gulphs the sun
Cast umber'd radiance red and dun,
Though never sun-beam could discern
The surface of that sable tarn,
In whose black mirror you may spy
The stars, while noon-tide lights the sky.
The gallant King he skirted still
The margin of that mighty hill;
Rocks upon rocks incumbent hung,
And torrents, down the gullies flung,
Join'd the rude river that brawl'd on,
Recoiling now from crag and stone,
Now diving deep from human ken,
And raving down its darksome glen.
The Monarch judged this desart wild,
With such romantic ruin piled,
Was theatre by Nature's hand
For feat of high achievement plann'd.

XI.

O rather he chose, that Monarch bold,
On vent'rous quest to ride,
In plate and mail, by wood and wold,
Than, with ermine trapp'd and cloth of gold,
In princely bower to bide;
The bursting crash of a foeman's spear,
As it shiver'd against his mail,
Was merrier music to his ear
Than courtier's whisper'd tale:
And the clash of Caliburn more dear,
When on the hostile casque it rung,
Than all the lays
To their monarch's praise
That the harpers of Reged sung.
He loved better to rest by wood or river,
Than in bower of his bride, Dame Guenever;
For he left that lady so lovely of cheer,
To follow adventures of danger and fear;

And the frank-hearted Monarch full little did wot,
That she smiled, in his absence, on brave Lancelot.

XII.

He rode, till over down and dell
The shade more broad and deeper fell;
And though around the mountain's head
Flow'd streams of purple, and gold, and red,
Dark at the base, unblest by beam,
Frown'd the black rocks, and roar'd the stream.
With toil the King his way pursued
By lonely Threlkeld's waste and wood,
Till on his course obliquely shone
The narrow valley of SAINT JOHN,
Down sloping to the western sky,
Where lingering sun-beams love to lie.
Right glad to feel those beams again,
The King drew up his charger's rein;
With gauntlet raised he screen'd his sight,
As dazzled with the level light,

And, from beneath his glove of mail,
Scann'd at his ease the lovely vale,
While 'gainst the sun his armour bright
Gleam'd ruddy like the beacon's light.

XIII.

Paled in by many a lofty hill,
The narrow dale lay smooth and still,
And, down its verdant bosom led,
A winding brooklet found its bed.
But, midmost of the vale, a mound
Arose, with airy turrets crown'd,
Buttress, and rampire's circling bound,
And mighty keep and tower;
Seem'd some primeval giant's hand
The castle's massive walls had plann'd,
A ponderous bulwark to withstand
Ambitious Nimrod's power.
Above the moated entrance slung,
The balanced draw-bridge trembling hung,

As jealous of a foe;
Wicket of oak, as iron hard,
With iron studded, clench'd, and barr'd,
And prong'd portcullis, join'd to guard
The gloomy pass below.
But the grey walls no banners crown'd,
Upon the watch-tower's airy round
No warder stood his horn to sound,
No guard beside the bridge was found,
And, where the gothic gateway frown'd,
Glanced neither bill nor bow.

XIV.

Beneath the castle's gloomy pride,
In ample round did Arthur ride
Three times; nor living thing he spied,
Nor heard a living sound,
Save that, awakening from her dream,
The owlet now began to scream,
In concert with the rushing stream,

That wash'd the battled mound.
He lighted from his goodly steed,
And he left him to graze on bank and mead;
And slowly he climb'd the narrow way,
That reach'd the entrance grim and grey,
And he stood the outward arch below,
And his bugle-horn prepared to blow,
In summons blithe and bold,
Deeming to rouse from iron sleep
The guardian of this dismal Keep,
Which well he guess'd the hold
Of wizard stern, or goblin grim,
Or pagan of gigantic limb,
The tyrant of the wold.

XV.

The ivory bugle's golden tip
Twice touch'd the Monarch's manly lip,
And twice his hand withdrew.
—Think not but Arthur's heart was good!

His shield was cross'd by the blessed rood,
Had a pagan host before him stood,
He had charged them through and through;
Yet the silence of that ancient place
Sunk on his heart, and he paused a space
Ere yet his horn he blew.
But, instant as its larum rung,
The castle-gate was open flung,
Portcullis rose with crashing groan
Full harshly up its groove of stone,
The balance beams obey'd the blast,
And down the trembling draw-bridge cast,
The vaulted arch before him lay,
With nought to bar the gloomy way,
And onward Arthur paced, with hand
On Caliburn's resistless brand.

XVI.

A hundred torches, flashing bright,
Dispell'd at once the gloomy night

That lour'd along the walls,
And shew'd the King's astonish'd sight
The inmates of the halls.
Nor wizard stern, nor goblin grim,
Nor giant huge of form and limb,
Nor heathen knight was there;
But the cressets, which odours flung aloft,
Shew'd, by their yellow light and soft,
A band of damsels fair.
Onward they came, like summer wave
That dances to the shore;
An hundred voices welcome gave,
And welcome o'er and o'er!
An hundred lovely hands assail
The bucklers of the Monarch's mail,
And busy labour'd to unhasp
Rivet of steel and iron clasp.
One wrapp'd him in a mantle fair,
And one flung odours on his hair;
His short curl'd ringlets one smooth'd down,
One wreath'd them with a myrtle crown.

A bride, upon her wedding day,
Was tended ne'er by troop so gay.

XVII.

Loud laugh'd they all,—the King, in vain,
With questions task'd the giddy train;
Let him entreat, or crave, or call,
'Twas one reply,—loud laugh'd they all.
Then o'er him mimic chains they fling,
Framed of the fairest flowers of spring.
While some their gentle force unite,
Onward to drag the wondering knight,
Some, bolder, urge his pace with blows,
Dealt with the lily or the rose.
Behind him were in triumph borne
The warlike arms he late had worn.
Four of the train combined to rear
The terrors of Tintadgel's spear;
Two, laughing at their lack of strength,
Dragg'd Caliburn in cumbrous length;

One, while she aped a martial stride,
Placed on her brows the helmet's pride,
Then scream'd, 'twixt laughter and surprise,
To feel its depth o'erwhelm her eyes.
With revel-shout, and triumph-song,
Thus gaily march'd the giddy throng.

XVIII.

Through many a gallery and hall
They led, I ween, their royal thrall;
At length, beneath a fair arcade
Their march and song at once they staid.
The eldest maiden of the band,
(The lovely maid was scarce eighteen,)
Raised, with imposing air, her hand,
And reverend silence did command,
On entrance of their Queen,
And they were mute.—But as a glance
They steal on Arthur's countenance
Bewilder'd with surprise,

Their smother'd mirth again 'gan speak,
In archly dimpled chin and cheek,
And laughter-lighted eyes.

XIX.

The attributes of those high days
Now only live in minstrel lays;
For Nature, now exhausted, still
Was then profuse of good and ill.
Strength was gigantic, valour high,
And wisdom soar'd beyond the sky,
And beauty had such matchless beam,
As lights not now a lover's dream.
Yet e'en in that romantic age,
Ne'er were such charms by mortal seen
As Arthur's dazzled eyes engage,
When forth on that enchanted stage,
With glittering train of maid and page,
Advanced the castle's Queen!

While up the hall she slowly pass'd,
Her dark eye on the King she cast,
That flash'd expression strong;
The longer dwelt that lingering look,
Her cheek the livelier colour took,
And scarce the shame-faced King could brook
The gaze that lasted long.
A sage, who had that look espied,
Where kindling passion strove with pride,
Had whisper'd, "Prince, beware!
From the chafed tyger rend the prey,
Rush on the lion when at bay,
Bar the fell dragon's blighted way,
But shun that lovely snare!"—

XX.

At once, that inward strife suppress'd,
The dame approach'd her warlike guest,
With greeting in that fair degree,
Where female pride and courtesy

Are blended with such passing art
As awes at once and charms the heart.
A courtly welcome first she gave,
Then of his goodness 'gan to crave
Construction fair and true
Of her light maidens' idle mirth,
Who drew from lonely glens their birth,
Nor knew to pay to stranger worth
And dignity their due;
And then she pray'd that he would rest
That night her castle's honour'd guest.
The Monarch meetly thanks express'd;
The banquet rose at her behest,
With lay and tale, and laugh and jest,
Apace the evening flew.

XXI.

The lady sate the Monarch by,
Now in her turn abash'd and shy,

And with indifference seem'd to hear
The toys he whisper'd in her ear.
Her bearing modest was and fair,
Yet shadows of constraint were there,
That shew'd an over-cautious care
Some inward thought to hide;
Oft did she pause in full reply,
And oft cast down her large dark eye,
Oft check'd the soft voluptuous sigh,
That heaved her bosom's pride.
Slight symptoms these, but shepherds know
How hot the mid-day sun shall glow,
From the mist of morning sky;
And so the wily Monarch guess'd,
That this assumed restraint express'd
More ardent passions in the breast,
Than ventured to the eye.
Closer he press'd, while beakers rang,
While maidens laugh'd and minstrels sang,
Still closer to her ear—

But why pursue the common tale?
Or wherefore shew how knights prevail
When ladies dare to hear?
Or wherefore trace, from what slight cause
Its source one tyrant passion draws,
Till, mastering all within,
Where lives the man that has not tried,
How mirth can into folly glide,
And folly into sin!

END OF CANTO FIRST.

THE

BRIDAL OF TRIERMAIN.

CANTO SECOND.

THE

BRIDAL OF TRIERMAIN.

CANTO SECOND.

Lyulph's Tale, continued.

Another day, another day,
And yet another, glides away!
The Saxon stern, the pagan Dane,
Maraud on Britain's shores again.
Arthur, of Christendom the flower,
Lies loitering in a lady's bower;
The horn, that foemen wont to fear,
Sounds but to wake the Cumbrian deer,

And Caliburn, the British pride,
Hangs useless by a lover's side.

II.

Another day, another day,
And yet another, glides away.
Heroic plans in pleasure drown'd,
He thinks not of the Table Round;
In lawless love dissolved his life,
He thinks not of his beauteous wife;
Better he loves to snatch a flower
From bosom of his paramour,
Than from a Saxon knight to wrest
The honours of his heathen crest;
Better to wreathe, 'mid tresses brown,
The heron's plume her hawk struck down,
Than o'er the altar give to flow
The banners of a Paynim foe.
Thus, week by week, and day by day,
His life inglorious glides away;

But she, that sooths his dream, with fear
Beholds his hour of waking near.

III.

Much force have mortal charms to stay
Our pace in Virtue's toilsome way;
But Guendolen's might far outshine
Each maid of merely mortal line.
Her mother was of human birth,
Her sire a Genie of the earth,
In days of old deem'd to preside
O'er lovers' wiles and beauty's pride,
By youths and virgins worshipp'd long,
With festive dance and choral song,
Till, when the cross to Britain came,
On heathen altars died the flame.
Now, deep in Wastdale's solitude,
The downfall of his rights he rued,
And, born of his resentment heir,
He train'd to guile that lady fair,

To sink in slothful sin and shame
The champions of the Christian name.
Well-skill'd to keep vain thoughts alive,
And all to promise, nought to give,
The timid youth had hope in store,
The bold and pressing gain'd no more.
As wilder'd children leave their home,
After the rainbow's arch to roam,
Her lovers barter'd fair esteem,
Faith, fame, and honour, for a dream.

IV.

Her sire's soft arts the soul to tame
She practised thus—till Arthur came;
Then, frail humanity had part,
And all the mother claim'd her heart.
Forgot each rule her father gave,
Sunk from a princess to a slave,
Too late must Guendolen deplore,
He, that has all, can hope no more!

Now must she see her lover strain,
At every turn, her feeble chain;
Watch, to new-bind each knot, and shrink
To view each fast-decaying link.
Art she invokes to Nature's aid,
Her vest to zone, her locks to braid;
Each varied pleasure heard her call,
The feast, the tourney, and the ball:
Her storied lore she next applies,
Taxing her mind to aid her eyes;
Now more than mortal wise, and then
In female softness sunk again;
Now, raptured, with each wish complying,
With feign'd reluctance now denying;
Each charm she varied, to retain
A varying heart—and all in vain!

V.

Thus in the garden's narrow bound,
Flank'd by some castle's Gothic round,

Fain would the artist's skill provide,
The limits of his realm to hide.
The walks in labyrinths he twines,
Shade after shade with skill combines,
With many a varied flowery knot,
And copse and arbour decks the spot,
Tempting the hasty foot to stay,
And linger on the lovely way——
Vain art! vain hope! tis fruitless all!
At length we reach the bounding wall,
And, sick of flower and trim-dress'd tree,
Long for rough glades and forest free,

VI.

Three summer months had scantly flown,
When Arthur, in embarrass'd tone,
Spoke of his liegemen and his throne;
Said, all too long had been his stay,
And duties, which a monarch sway,

Duties, unknown to humbler men,
Must tear her knight from Guendolen.—
She listen'd silently the while,
Her mood express'd in bitter smile;
Beneath her eye must Arthur quail,
And oft resume the unfinish'd tale,
Confessing, by his downcast eye,
The wrong he sought to justify.
He ceased. A moment mute she gazed,
And then her looks to heaven she raised;
One palm her temples veil'd, to hide
The tear that sprung in spite of pride;
The other for an instant press'd
The foldings of her silken vest!

VII.

At her reproachful sign and look,
The hint the Monarch's conscience took.
Eager he spoke—"No, lady, no!
Deem not of British Arthur so,

Nor think he can deserter prove
To the dear pledge of mutual love.
I swear by sceptre and by sword,
As belted knight and Britain's lord,
That, if a boy shall claim my care,
That boy is born a kingdom's heir;
But, if a maiden Fate allows,
To chuse that maid a fitting spouse,
A summer day in lists shall strive
My knights,—the bravest knights alive,—
And he, the best and bravest tried,
Shall Arthur's daughter claim for bride."——
He spoke, with voice resolved and high—
The lady deign'd him not reply.

VIII.

At dawn of morn, ere on the brake
His matins did a warbler make,
Or stirr'd his wing to brush away
A single dew-drop from the spray,

Ere yet a sun-beam, through the mist,
The castle battlements had kiss'd,
The gates revolve, the draw-bridge falls,
And Arthur sallies from the walls.
Doff'd his soft garb of Persia's loom,
And steel from spur to helmet-plume,
His Lybian steed full proudly trode,
And joyful neigh'd beneath his load.
The Monarch gave a passing sigh
To penitence and pleasures by,
When, lo! to his astonish'd ken
Appear'd the form of Guendolen.

IX.

Beyond the outmost wall she stood,
Attired like huntress of the wood:
Sandall'd her feet, her ancles bare,
And eagle plumage deck'd her hair;
Firm was her look, her bearing bold,
And in her hand a cup of gold.

" Thou goest !" she said, " and ne'er again
Must we two meet, in joy or pain.
Full fain would I this hour delay,
Though weak the wish—yet, wilt thou stay ?
No ! thou look'st forward. Still attend,—
Part we like lover and like friend."
She raised the cup—" Not this the juice
The sluggish vines of earth produce ;
Pledge we, at parting, in the draught
Which Genii love !"—she said and quaff'd ;
And strange unwonted lustres fly
From her flush'd cheek and sparkling eye.

X.

The courteous Monarch bent him low,
And, stooping down from saddle-bow,
Lifted the cup, in act to drink.
A drop escaped the goblet's brink—
Intense as liquid fire from hell,
Upon the charger's neck it fell.

Screaming with agony and fright,
He bolted twenty feet upright—
—The peasant still can shew the dint,
Where his hoofs lighted on the flint.
From Arthur's hand the goblet flew,
Scattering a shower of fiery dew,
That burn'd and blighted where it fell!
The frantic steed rush'd up the dell,
As whistles from the bow the reed;
Nor bit nor rein could check his speed
Until he gain'd the hill;
Then breath and sinew fail'd apace,
And, reeling from the desperate race,
He stood exhausted, still
The Monarch, breathless and amazed,
Back on the fatal castle gazed——
Nor tower nor donjon could he spy,
Darkening against the morning sky;
But, on the spot where once they frown'd,
The lonely streamlet brawl'd around

A tufted knoll, where dimly shone
Fragments of rock and rifted stone.
Musing on this strange hap the while,
The King wends back to fair Carlisle;
And cares, that cumber royal sway,
Wore memory of the past away.

XI.

Full fifteen years, and more, were sped,
Each brought new wreaths to Arthur's head.
Twelve bloody fields, with glory fought,
The Saxons to subjection brought;
Rython, the mighty giant, slain
By his good brand, relieved Bretagne:
The Pictish Gillamore in fight,
And Roman Lucius, own'd his might;
And wide were through the world renown'd
The glories of his Table Round.
Each knight, who sought adventurous fame,
To the bold court of Britain came,

And all who suffer'd causeless wrong,
From tyrant proud or faitour strong,
Sought Arthur's presence to complain,
Nor there for aid implored in vain.

XII.

For this the King, with pomp and pride,
Held solemn court at Whitsuntide,
And summon'd Prince and Peer,
All who owed homage for their land,
Or who craved knighthood from his hand,
Or who had succour to demand,
To come from far and near.
At such high tide, were glee and game
Mingled with feats of martial fame,
For many a stranger champion came
In lists to break a spear;
And not a knight of Arthur's host,
Save that he trod some foreign coast,
But at this feast of Pentecost
Before him must appear.

Ah, Minstrels! when the Table Round
Arose, with all its warriors crown'd,
There was a theme for bards to sound
In triumph to their string!
Five hundred years are past and gone,
But Time shall draw his dying groan,
Ere he behold the British throne
Begirt with such a ring!

XIII.

The heralds named the appointed spot,
As Caerleon or Camelot,
Or Carlisle fair and free.
At Penrith, now, the feast was set,
And in fair Eamont's vale were met
The flower of chivalry.
There Galaad sate with manly grace,
Yet maiden meekness in his face;
There Morolt of the iron mace,
And love-lorn Tristrem there;

And Dinadam with lively glance,
And Lanval with the fairy lance,
And Mordred with his look askaunce,
Brunor and Bevidere.
Why should I tell of numbers more?
Sir Cay, Sir Banier, and Sir Bore,
Sir Carodac the keen,
The gentle Gawain's courteous lore,
Hector de Mares and Pellinore,
And Lancelot, that ever more
Look'd stol'n wise on the Queen.

XIV.

When wine and mirth did most abound,
And harpers play'd their blithest round,
A shrilly trumpet shook the ground,
And marshals clear'd the ring;
A Maiden, on a palfrey white,
Heading a band of damsels bright,
Paced through the circle, to alight
And kneel before the King.

Arthur, with strong emotion, saw
Her graceful boldness check'd by awe,
Her dress like huntress of the wold,
Her bow and baldrick trapp'd with gold,
Her sandall'd feet, her ancles bare,
And the eagle plume that deck'd her hair.
Graceful her veil she backwards flung——
The King, as from his seat he sprung,
Almost cried, " Guendolen !"
But 'twas a face more frank and wild,
Betwixt the woman and the child,
Where less of magic beauty smiled
Than of the race of men;
And in the forehead's haughty grace,
The lines of Britain's royal race,
Pendragon's, you might ken.

XV.

Faultering, yet gracefully, she said—
" Great Prince! behold an orphan maid,

In her departed mother's name,
A father's vow'd protection claim!
The vow was sworn in desart lone,
In the deep valley of St John."—
At once the King the suppliant raised,
And kiss'd her brow, her beauty praised;
His vow, he said, should well be kept,
Ere in the sea the sun was dipp'd,—
Then, conscious, glanced upon his queen:
But she, unruffled at the scene,
Of human frailty construed mild,
Look'd upon Lancelot, and smiled.

XVI.

"Up! up! each knight of gallant crest!
Take buckler, spear, and brand!
He that to-day shall bear him best,
Shall win my Gyneth's hand.
And Arthur's daughter, when a bride,
Shall bring a noble dower;

Both fair Strath-Clyde and Reged wide,
And Carlisle town and tower."—
Then might you hear each valiant knight,
To page and squire that cried,
" Bring my armour bright, and my courser wight!
'Tis not each day that a warrior's might
May win a royal bride."—
Then cloaks and caps of maintenance
In haste aside they fling;
The helmets glance, and gleams the lance,
And the steel-weaved hauberks ring.
Small care had they of their peaceful array,
They might gather it that wolde;
For brake and bramble glitter'd gay,
With pearls and cloth of gold.

XVII.

Within trumpet sound of the Table Round
Were fifty champions free,
And they all arise to fight that prize,—
They all arise, but three.

Nor love's fond troth, nor wedlock's oath,
One gallant could withhold,
For priests will allow of a broken vow,
For penance or for gold.
But sigh and glance from ladies bright
Among the troop were thrown,
To plead their right, and true-love plight,
And plain of honour flown.
The knights they busied them so fast,
With buckling spur and belt,
That sigh and look, by ladies cast,
Were neither seen nor felt.
From pleading, or upbraiding glance,
Each gallant turns aside,
And only thought, "If speeds my lance,
A queen becomes my bride!
She has fair Strath-Clyde, and Reged wide,
And Carlisle tower and town;
She is the loveliest maid, beside,
That ever heir'd a crown."—

So in haste their coursers they bestride,
And strike their visors down.

XVIII.

The champions, arm'd in martial sort,
Have throng'd into the list,
And but three knights of Arthur's court
Are from the tourney miss'd.
And still these lovers' fame survives
For faith so constant shown,—
There were two who loved their neighbours' wives,
And one who loved his own.
The first was Lancelot de Lac,
The second Tristrem bold,
The third was valiant Carodac,
Who won the cup of gold,
What time, of all King Arthur's crew,
(Thereof came jeer and laugh,)
He, as the mate of lady true,
Alone the cup could quaff.

Though envy's tongue would fain surmise,
That, but for very shame,
Sir Carodac, to fight that prize,
Had given both cup and dame;
Yet, since but one of that fair court
Was true to wedlock's shrine,
Brand him who will with base report,—
He shall be free from mine.

XIX.

Now caracol'd the steeds in air,
Now plumes and pennons wanton'd fair,
As all around the lists so wide
In panoply the champions ride.
King Arthur saw, with startled eye,
The flower of chivalry march by,
The bulwark of the Christian creed,
The kingdom's shield in hour of need.
Too late he thought him of the woe
Might from their civil conflict flow;

For well he knew they would not part
Till cold was many a gallant heart.
His hasty vow he 'gan to rue,
And Gyneth then apart he drew;
To her his leading-staff resign'd,
But added caution grave and kind.

XX.

" Thou see'st, my child, as promise-bound,
I bid the trump for tourney sound.
Take thou my warder, as the queen
And umpire of the martial scene;
But mark thou this:—as Beauty bright
Is polar star to valiant knight,
As at her word his sword he draws,
His fairest guerdon her applause,
So gentle maid should never ask
Of knighthood vain and dangerous task;
And Beauty's eyes should ever be
Like the twin stars that sooth the sea,

And Beauty's breath should whisper peace,
And bid the storm of battle cease.
I tell thee this, lest all too far
These knights urge tourney into war.
Blithe as the trumpet let them go,
And fairly counter blow for blow;—
No striplings these, who succour need
For a razed helm or falling steed.
But, Gyneth, when the strife grows warm,
And threatens death or deadly harm,
Thy sire entreats, thy king commands,
Thou drop the warder from thy hands.
Trust thou thy father with thy fate,
Doubt not he chuse thee fitting mate;
Nor be it said, through Gyneth's pride
A rose of Arthur's chaplet died."—

XXI.

A proud and discontented glow
O'ershadow'd Gyneth's brow of snow;
She put the warder by:—

" Reserve thy boon, my liege," she said,
" Thus chaffer'd down and limited,
Debased and narrow'd, for a maid
Of less degree than I.
No petty chief, but holds his heir
At a more honour'd price and rare
Than Britain's King holds me !
Although the sun-burn'd maid, for dower,
Has but her father's rugged tower,
His barren hill and lee.
King Arthur swore, ' by crown and sword,
' As belted knight, and Britain's lord,
' That a whole summer's day should strive
' His knights, the bravest knights alive !'
Recall thine oath ! and to her glen
Poor Gyneth can return agen;
Not on thy daughter will the stain,
That soils thy sword and crown, remain.
But think not she will e'er be bride
Save to the bravest, proved and tried;

Pendragon's daughter will not fear
For clashing sword or splinter'd spear,
Nor shrink though blood should flow;
And all too well sad Guendolen
Hath taught the faithlessness of men,
That child of hers should pity, when
Their meed they undergo."—

XXII.

He frown'd and sigh'd, the Monarch bold:—
" I give—what I may not withhold;
For, not for danger, dread, or death,
Must British Arthur break his faith.
Too late I mark, thy mother's art
Hath taught thee this relentless part.
I blame her not, for she had wrong,
But not to these my faults belong.
Use, then, the warder as thou wilt;
But trust me, that, if life be spilt,
In Arthur's love, in Arthur's grace,
Gyneth shall lose a daughter's place."

With that he turn'd his head aside,
Nor brook'd to gaze upon her pride,
As, with the truncheon raised, she sate
The arbitress of mortal fate;
Nor brook'd to mark, in ranks disposed,
How the bold champions stood opposed,
For shrill the trumpet-flourish fell
Upon his ear like passing-bell!
Then first from sight of martial fray
Did Britain's hero turn away.

XXIII.

But Gyneth heard the clangour high,
As hears the hawk the partridge-cry.
Oh, blame her not! the blood was hers,
That at the trumpet's summons stirs!—
And e'en the gentlest female eye
Might the brave strife of chivalry
Awhile untroubled view;

So well accomplish'd was each knight,
To strike and to defend in fight,
Their meeting was a goodly sight,
While plate and mail held true.
The lists with painted plumes were strown,
Upon the wind at random thrown,
But helm and breast-plate bloodless shone;
It seem'd their feather'd crests alone
Should this encounter rue.
And ever, as the combat grows,
The trumpet's cheery voice arose,
Like lark's shrill song the flourish flows,
Heard while the gale of April blows
The merry greenwood through.

XXIV.

But soon to earnest grew their game,
The spears drew blood, the swords struck flame,
And, horse and man, to ground there came
Knights, who shall rise no more!

Gone was the pride the war that graced,
Gay shields were cleft, and crests defaced,
And steel coats riven, and helms unbraced,
And pennons stream'd with gore.
Gone, too, were fence and fair array,
And desperate strength made deadly way
At random through the bloody fray,
And blows were dealt with headlong sway,
Unheeding where they fell;
And now the trumpets clamours seem
Like the shrill sea-bird's wailing scream,
Heard o'er the whirlpool's gulphing stream,
The sinking seaman's knell!

XXV.

Seem'd in this dismal hour, that Fate
Would Camlan's ruin antedate,
And spare dark Mordred's crime;
Already gasping on the ground
Lie twenty of the Table Round,
Of chivalry the prime.

Arthur, in anguish, tore away
From head and beard his tresses grey,
And she, proud Gyneth, felt dismay,
And quaked with ruth and fear;
But still she deem'd her mother's shade
Hung o'er the tumult, and forbade
The sign that had the slaughter staid,
And chid the rising tear.
Then Brunor, Taulas, Mador, fell,
Helias the White, and Lionel,
And many a champion more;
Rochemont and Dinadam are down,
And Ferrand of the Forest Brown
Lies gasping in his gore.
Vanoc, by mighty Morolt press'd
Even to the confines of the list,
Young Vanoc of the beardless face,
(Fame spoke the youth of Merlin's race,)
O'erpower'd at Gyneth's footstool bled,
His heart's blood dyed her sandals red.

But then the sky was overcast,
Then howl'd at once a whirlwind's blast,
And, rent by sudden throes,
Yawn'd in mid lists the quaking earth,
And from the gulph,—tremendous birth!
The form of Merlin rose.

XXVI.

Sternly the wizard prophet eyed
The dreary lists with slaughter dyed,
And sternly raised his hand:—
"Madmen," he said, "your strife forbear!
And thou, fair cause of mischief, hear
The doom thy fates demand!
Long shall close in stony sleep
Eyes for ruth that would not weep,
Iron lethargy shall seal
Heart that pity scorn'd to feel.
Yet, because thy mother's art
Warp'd thine unsuspicious heart,

And for love of Arthur's race,
Punishment is blent with grace
Thou shalt bear thy penance lone,
In the Valley of Saint John,
And this weird* shall overtake thee ;—
Sleep, until a knight shall wake thee,
For feats of arms as far renown'd
As warrior of the Table Round.
Long endurance of thy slumber
Well may teach the world to number
All their woes from Gyneth's pride,
When the Red Cross champions died.'—

XXVII.

As Merlin speaks, on Gyneth's eye
Slumber's load begins to lie ;
Fear and Anger vainly strive
Still to keep its light alive.
Twice, with effort and with pause,
O'er her brow her hand she draws

* Doom.

Twice her strength in vain she tries,
From the fatal chair to rise;
Merlin's magic doom is spoken,
Vanoc's death must now be wroken.
Slow the dark fringed eye-lids fall,
Curtaining each azure ball,
Slowly as on summer eves
Violets fold their dusky leaves.
The weighty baton of command
Now bears down her sinking hand,
On her shoulder droops her head;
Net of pearl and golden thread,
Bursting, gave her locks to flow
O'er her arm and breast of snow.
And so lovely seem'd she there,
Spell-bound in her ivory chair,
That her angry sire, repenting,
Craved stern Merlin for relenting,
And the champions, for her sake,
Would again the contest wake;

Till, in necromantic night,
Gyneth vanish'd from their sight.

XXVIII.

Still she bears her weird alone,
In the Valley of Saint John;
And her semblance oft will seem
Mingling in a champion's dream,
Of her weary lot to plain,
And crave his aid to burst her chain.
While her wondrous tale was new,
Warriors to her rescue drew,
East and west, and south and north,
From the Liffy, Thames, and Forth.
Most have sought in vain the glen,
Tower nor castle could they ken;
Not at every time or tide,
Nor by every eye, descried.
Fast and vigil must be borne,
Many a night in watching worn,

Ere an eye of mortal powers
Can discern those magic towers.
Of the persevering few,
Some from hopeless task withdrew,
When they read the dismal threat
Graved upon the gloomy gate.
Few have braved the yawning door,
And those few return'd no more.
In the lapse of time forgot,
Well nigh lost is Gyneth's lot;
Sound her sleep as in the tomb,
Till waken'd by the trump of doom.

END OF LYULPH'S TALE.

Here pause, my tale; for all too soon,
My Lucy, comes the hour of noon.
Already from thy lofty dome
Its courtly inmates 'gin to roam,

And each, to kill the goodly day
That God has granted them, his way
Of lazy sauntering has sought;
Lordlings and witlings not a few,
Incapable of doing aught,
Yet ill at ease with nought to do.
Here is no longer place for me;
For, Lucy, thou would'st blush to see
Some phantom, fashionably thin,
With limb of lath and kerchief'd chin,
And lounging gape, or sneering grin,
Steal sudden on our privacy.
And how should I, so humbly born,
Endure the graceful spectre's scorn?
Faith! ill I fear, while conjuring wand
Of English oak is hard at hand.

II.

Or grant the hour be all too soon
For Hessian boot and pantaloon,

And grant the lounger seldom strays
Beyond the smooth and gravell'd maze,
Laud we the gods, that Fashion's train
Holds hearts of more adventurous strain.
Artists are hers, who scorn to trace
Their rules from Nature's boundless grace,
But their right paramount assert
To limit her by pedant art,
Damning whate'er of vast and fair
Exceeds a canvass three feet square.
This thicket, for their *gumption* fit,
May furnish such a happy *bit.*
Bards, too, are hers, wont to recite
Their own sweet lays by waxen light,
Half in the salver's tinkle drown'd,
While the chasse-caffé glides around;
And such may hither secret stray,
To labour an extempore:
Or sportsman, with his boisterous hollo,
May here his wiser spaniel follow,

Or stage-struck Juliet may presume
To choose this bower for tyring room;
And we alike must shun regard,
From painter, player, sportsman, bard.
Insects that skim in Fashion's sky,
Wasp, blue-bottle, or butterfly,
Lucy, have all alarms for us,
For all can hum and all can buz.

III.

But oh, my Lucy, say how long
We still must dread this trifling throng,
And stoop to hide, with coward art,
The genuine feelings of the heart!
No parents thine, whose just command
Should rule their child's obedient hand;
Thy guardians, with contending voice,
Press each his individual choice.
And which is Lucy's?—Can it be
That puny fop, trimm'd cap-a-pee,

Who loves in the saloon to shew
The arms that never knew a foe;
Whose sabre trails along the ground,
Whose legs in shapeless boots are drown'd;
A new Achilles, sure,—the steel
Fled from his breast to fence his heel;
One, for the simple manly grace
That won't to deck our martial race,
Who comes in foreign trashery
  Of tinkling chain and spur,
A walking haberdashery,
  Of feathers, lace, and fur:
In Rowley's antiquated phrase,
Horse-milliner* of modern days.

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* "The trammels of the palfraye pleased his sight,
And the horse-millanere his head with roses dight."
ROWLEY'S *Ballads of Charitie.*

IV.

Or is it he, the wordy youth,
So early train'd for stateman's part,
Who talks of honour, faith, and truth,
As themes that he has got by heart;
Whose ethics Chesterfield can teach,
Whose logic is from Single-speech;
Who scorns the meanest thought to vent,
Save in the phrase of parliament;
Who, in a tale of cat and mouse,
Calls "order," and "divides the house,"
Who "craves permission to reply,"
Whose "noble friend is in his eye;"
Whose loving tender some have reckon'd
A *motion*, you should gladly *second*?

V.

What, neither? Can there be a third,
To such resistless swains preferr'd?—

O why, my Lucy, turn aside,
With that quick glance of injured pride?
Forgive me, love, I cannot bear
That alter'd and resentful air.
Were all the wealth of Russel mine,
And all the rank of Howard's line,
All would I give for leave to dry
That dew-drop trembling in thine eye.
Think not I fear such fops can wile
From Lucy more than careless smile;
But yet if wealth and high degree
Give gilded counters currency,
Must I not fear, when rank and birth
Stamp the pure ore of genuine worth?
Nobles there are, whose martial fires
Rival the fame that raised their sires,
And patriots, skill'd through storms of fate
To guide and guard the reeling state.
Such, such there are—if such should come,
Arthur must tremble and be dumb,

Self-exiled seek some distant shore,
And mourn till life and grief are o'er.

VI.

What sight, what signal of alarm,
That Lucy clings to Arthur's arm?
Or is it, that the rugged way
Makes Beauty lean on lover's stay?
Oh, no! for on the vale and brake,
Nor sight nor sounds of danger wake,
And this trim sward of velvet green
Were carpet for the fairy queen.
That pressure slight was but to tell,
That Lucy loves her Arthur well,
And fain would banish from his mind
Suspicious fear and doubt unkind.

VII.

But would'st thou bid the demons fly
Like mist before the dawning sky,

There is but one resistless spell—
Say, wilt thou guess, or must I tell?
'T'were hard to name in minstrel phrase,
A laundaulet and four blood-bays,
But bards agree this wizard band
Can but be bound in Northern Land.
'Tis there—nay, draw not back thy hand!—
'Tis there this slender finger round
Must golden amulet be bound,
Which, bless'd with many a holy prayer,
Can change to rapture lovers' care,
And doubt and jealousy shall die,
And fears give place to ecstacy.

VIII.

Now, trust me, Lucy, all too long
Has been thy lover's tale and song.
O why so silent, love, I pray?
Have I not spoke the livelong day?
And will not Lucy deign to say

One word her friend to bless?
I ask but one—a simple sound,
Within three little letters bound,
O let the word be YES!

END OF CANTO SECOND.

THE

BRIDAL OF TRIERMAIN.

CANTO THIRD.

THE

BRIDAL OF TRIERMAIN.

CANTO THIRD.

INTRODUCTION.

Long loved, long woo'd, and lately won,
My life's best hope, and now mine own!
Doth not this rude and Alpine glen
Recall our favourite haunts agen?
A wild resemblance we can trace,
Though reft of every softer grace,
As the rough warrior's brow may bear
A likeness to a sister fair.
Full well advised our Highland host,
That this wild pass on foot be cross'd,

While round Ben-Cruach's mighty base
Wheel the slow steeds and lingering chaise.
The keen old carle, with Scottish pride,
He praised his glen and mountains wide;
An eye he bears for nature's face,
Aye, and for woman's lovely grace.
Even in such mean degree we find
The subtle Scot's observing mind;
For, nor the chariot nor the train
Could gape of vulgar wonder gain,
But when old Allan would expound
Of Beal-na-paish* the Celtic sound,
His bonnet doff'd, and bow, applied
His legend to my bonny bride;
While Lucy blush'd beneath his eye,
Courteous and cautious, shrewd and sly.

---

* Beal-na-paish, the Vale of the Bridal.

II.

Enough of him.—Now, ere we lose,
Plunged in the vale, the distant views,
Turn thee, my love! look back once more
To the blue lake's retiring shore.
On its smooth breast the shadows seem
Like objects in a morning dream,
What time the slumberer is aware
He sleeps, and all the vision's air:
Even so, on yonder liquid lawn,
In hues of bright reflection drawn,
Distinct the shaggy mountains lie,
Distinct the rocks, distinct the sky;
The summer clouds so plain we note,
That we might count each dappled spot:
We gaze and we admire, yet know
The scene is all delusive shew.
Such dreams of bliss would Arthur draw,
When first his Lucy's form he saw;

Yet sigh'd and sicken'd as he drew,
Despairing they could e'er prove true !

III.

But, Lucy, turn thee now, to view
Up the fair glen our destined way :
The fairy path that we pursue,
Distinguish'd but by greener hue,
Winds round the purple brae,
While Alpine flowers of varied dye
For carpet serve, or tapestry.
See how the little runnels leap,
In threads of silver, down the steep,
To swell the brooklet's moan !
Seems that the Highland Naiad grieves,
Fantastic while her crown she weaves,
Of rowan, birch, and alder leaves,
So lovely, and so lone.
There's no illusion there ; these flowers,
That wailing brook, these lovely bowers,

Are, Lucy, all our own;
And, since thine Arthur call'd thee wife,
Such seems the prospect of his life,
A lovely path, on-winding still,
By gurgling brook and sloping hill.
'Tis true that mortals cannot tell
What waits them in the distant dell;
But be it hap, or be it harm,
We tread the path-way arm in arm.

IV.

And now, my Lucy, wot'st thou why
I could thy bidding twice deny,
When twice you pray'd I would again
Resume the legendary strain
Of the bold Knight of Triermain?
At length yon peevish vow you swore,
That you would sue to me no more,
Until the minstrel fit drew near,
And made me prize a listening ear.

But, loveliest, when thou first didst pray
Continuance of the knightly lay,
Was it not on the happy day
That made thy hand mine own?
When, dizzied with mine ecstacy,
Nought past, or present, or to be,
Could I or think on, hear, or see,
Save, Lucy, thee alone!
A giddy draught my rapture was,
As ever chemist's magic gas.

V.

Again the summons I denied
In yon fair capital of Clyde:
My Harp—or let me rather chuse
The good old classic form—my Muse,
(For Harp's an over-scutched phrse,
Worn out by bards of modern days,)
My Muse, then—seldom will she wake
Save by dim wood and silent lake;

She is the wild and rustic Maid,
Whose foot unsandal'd loves to tread
Where the soft green-sward is inlaid
With varied moss and thyme;
And, lest the simple lily-braid,
That coronets her temples, fade,
She hides her still in greenwood shade,
To meditate her rhyme.

VI.

And now she comes! The murmur dear
Of the wild brook hath caught her ear,
The glade hath won her eye;
She longs to join with each blithe rill
That dances down the Highland hill,
Her blither melody.
And now, my Lucy's way to cheer,
She bids Ben-Cruach's echoes hear

How closed the tale, my love whilere
Loved for its chivalry.
List how she tells, in notes of flame,
" Child Roland to the dark tower came !"

THE

BRIDAL OF TRIERMAIN.

CANTO THIRD.

Bewcastle now must keep the Hold,
Speir-Adam's steeds must bide in stall,
Of Hartley-burn the bowmen bold
Must only shoot from battled wall;
And Liddesdale may buckle spur,
And Teviot now may belt the brand,
Tarras and Ewes keep nightly stir,
And Eskdale forray Cumberland.
Of wasted fields and plunder'd flocks
The Borderers bootless may complain;
They lack the sword of brave De Vaux,
There comes no aid from Triermain.

That lord, on high adventure bound,
Hath wander'd forth alone,
And day and night keeps watchful round
In the valley of Saint John.

II.

When first began his vigil bold,
The moon twelve summer nights was old,
And shone both fair and full;
High in the vault of cloudless blue,
O'er streamlet, dale, and rock, she threw
Her light composed and cool.
Stretch'd on the brown hill's heathy breast,
Sir Roland eyed the vale;
Chief, where, distinguish'd from the rest,
Those clustering rocks uprear'd their crest,
The dwelling of the fair distress'd,
As told grey Lyulph's tale.
Thus as he lay, the lamp of night
Was quivering on his armour bright,

In beams that rose and fell,
And danced upon his buckler's boss,
That lay beside him on the moss,
As on a crystal well.

III.

Ever he watch'd, and oft he deem'd,
While on the mound the moonlight stream'd,
It alter'd to his eyes;
Fain would he hope the rocks 'gan change
To buttress'd walls their shapeless range,
Fain think, by transmutation strange,
He saw grey turrets rise.
But scarce his heart with hope throbb'd high,
Before the wild illusions fly,
Which fancy had conceived,
Abetted by an anxious eye
That long'd to be deceived.
It was a fond deception all,
Such as, in solitary hall,

Beguiles the musing eye,
When, gazing on the sinking fire,
Bulwark and battlement and spire
In the red gulph we spy.
For, seen by moon of middle night,
Or by the blaze of noontide bright,
Or by the dawn of morning light,
Or evening's western flame,
In every tide, at every hour,
In mist, in sunshine, and in shower,
The rocks remain'd the same.

IV.

Oft has he traced the charmed mound,
Oft climb'd its crest, or paced it round,
Yet nothing might explore,
Save that the crags so rudely piled,
At distance seen, resemblance wild
To a rough fortress bore.
Yet still his watch the Warrior keeps,
Feeds hard and spare, and seldom sleeps,

And drinks but of the well;
Ever by day he walks the hill,
And when the evening gale is chill,
He seeks a rocky cell,
Like hermit poor to bid his bead,
And tell his Ave and his Creed,
Invoking every Saint at need,
For aid to burst the spell.

V.

And now the moon her orb has hid,
And dwindled to a silver thread,
Dim seen in middle heaven,
While o'er its curve careering fast,
Before the fury of the blast,
The midnight clouds are driven.
The brooklet raved, for on the hills
The upland showers had swoln the rills,
And down the torrents came;
Mutter'd the distant thunder dread,

And frequent o'er the vale was spread
A sheet of lightning flame.
De Vaux, within his mountain cave,
(No human step the storm durst brave,)
To moody meditation gave
Each faculty of soul,
Till, lull'd by distant torrent-sound,
And the sad wind that whistled round,
Upon his thoughts, in musing drown'd,
A broken slumber stole.

VI.

'Twas then was heard a heavy sound,
(Sound strange and fearful there to hear,
'Mongst desert hills, where, leagues around,
Dwelt but the gor-cock and the deer:)
As starting from his couch of fern,
Again he heard, in clangor stern,
That deep and solemn swell,
Twelve times, in measured tone, it spoke,

Like some proud minster's pealing clock,
Or city's larum-bell.
What thought was Roland's first when fell,
In that deep wilderness, the knell
Upon his startled ear?
To slander warrior were I loth,
Yet must I hold my minstrel troth,—
It was a thought of fear.

VII.

But lively was the mingled thrill
That chased that momentary chill,
For Love's keen wish was there,
And eager Hope, and Valour high,
And the proud glow of Chivalry,
That burn'd to do and dare.
Forth from the cave the Warrior rush'd,
Long ere the mountain-voice was hush'd,
That answer'd to the knell;
For long and far the unwonted sound,

Eddying in echoes round and round,
Was toss'd from fell to fell;
And Glaramara answer flung,
And Grisdale-pike responsive rung,
And Legbert heights their echoes swung,
As far as Derwent's dell.

VIII.

Forth upon trackless darkness gazed
The Knight, bedeafen'd and amazed,
Till all was hush'd and still,
Save the swollen torrent's sullen roar,
And the night blast that wildly bore
Its course along the hill.
Then on the northern sky there came
A light, as of reflected flame,
And over Legbert-head,
As if by magic art controll'd,
A mighty meteor slowly roll'd
Its orb of fiery red;

Thou would'st have thought some demon dire
Came mounted on that car of fire,
To do his errand dread.
Far on the sloping valley's course,
On thicket, rock, and torrent hoarse,
Shingle and Scrae,* and Fell and Force,†
A dusky light arose:
Display'd, yet alter'd, was the scene;
Dark rock, and brook of silver sheen,
Even the gay thicket's summer green,
In bloody tincture glows.

IX.

De Vaux had mark'd the sunbeams set,
At eve, upon the coronet
Of that enchanted mound,
And seen but crags at random flung,
That, o'er the brawling torrent hung,
In desolation frown'd.

---

* Bank of loose stones. † Water-fall.

What sees he by that meteor's lour?—
A banner'd Castle, Keep, and Tower,
Return the lurid gleam,
With battled walls and buttress fast,
And barbican* and ballium† vast,
And airy flanking towers, that cast
Their shadows on the stream!
'Tis no deceit! distinctly clear
Crenell‡ and parapet appear,
While o'er the pile that meteor drear
Makes momentary pause;
Then forth its solemn path it drew,
And fainter yet and fainter grew
Those gloomy towers upon the view,
As its wild light withdraws.

---

* The outer defence of the castle-gate.

† Fortified court.

‡ Apertures for shooting arrows.

X.

Forth from the cave did Roland rush,
O'er crag and stream, through briar and bush;
Yet far he had not sped,
Ere sunk was that portentous light
Behind the hills, and utter night
Was on the valley spread.
He paused perforce,—and blew his horn,
And on the mountain-echoes borne
Was heard an answering sound,
A wild and lonely trumpet-note,—
In middle air it seem'd to float
High o'er the battled mound;
And sounds were heard, as when a guard
Of some proud castle, holding ward,
Pace forth their nightly round.
The valiant Knight of Triermain
Rung forth his challenge-blast again,

But answer came there none;
And 'mid the mingled wind and rain,
Darkling he sought the vale in vain,
Until the dawning shone;
And when it dawn'd, that wondrous sight,
Distinctly seen by meteor-light,
It all had pass'd away!
And that enchanted mount once more
A pile of granite fragments bore,
As at the close of day.

XI.

Steel'd for the deed, De Vaux's heart
Scorn'd from his venturous quest to part,
He walks the vale once more;
But only sees, by night or day,
That shatter'd pile of rocks so grey,
Hears but the torrent's roar.
Till when, through hills of azure borne,
The moon renew'd her silver horn,

Just at the time her waning ray
Had faded in the dawing day,
A summer mist arose;
Adown the vale the vapours float,
And cloudy undulations moat
That tufted mound of mystic note,
As round its base they close.
And higher now the fleecy tide
Ascends its stern and shaggy side,
Until the airy billows hide
The rock's majestic isle;
It seem'd a veil of filmy lawn,
By some fantastic fairy drawn
Around enchanted pile.

XII.

The breeze came softly down the brook,
And sighing as it blew,
The veil of silver mist it shook,
And to De Vaux's eager look

Renew'd that wondrous view.
For, though the loitering vapour braved
The gentle breeze, yet oft it waved
Its mantle's dewy fold;
And, still, when shook that filmy screen,
Were towers and bastions dimly seen,
And Gothic battlements between
Their gloomy length unroll'd.
Speed, speed, De Vaux, ere on thine eye
Once more the fleeting vision die!
—The gallant Knight can speed
As prompt and light as, when the hound
Is opening, and the horn is wound,
Careers the hunter's steed.
Down the steep dell his course amain
Hath rivall'd archer's shaft;
But ere the mound he could attain,
The rocks their shapeless form regain,
And mocking loud his labour vain,
The mountain spirits laugh'd.

Far up the echoing dell was borne
Their wild unearthly shout of scorn.

XIII.

Wroth wax'd the Warrior.—" Am I then
Fool'd by the enemies of men,
Like a poor hind, whose homeward way
Is haunted by malicious fay ?
Is Triermain become your taunt,
De Vaux your scorn? False fiends, avaunt !"
A weighty curtal-axe he bare ;
The baleful blade so bright and square,
And the tough shaft of heben wood,
Were oft in Scottish gore embrued.
Backward his stately form he drew,
And at the rocks the weapon threw,
Just where one crag's projected crest
Hung proudly balanced o'er the rest.
Hurl'd with main force, the weapon's shock
Rent a huge fragment of the rock.

If by mere strength 'twere hard to tell,
Or if the blow dissolved some spell,
But down the headlong ruin came,
With cloud of dust and flash of flame.
Down bank, o'er bush, its course was borne,
Crush'd lay the copse, the earth was torn,
Till staid at length, the ruin dread
Cumber'd the torrent's rocky bed,
And bade the waters' high-swoln tide
Seek other passage for its pride.

XIV.

When ceased that thunder, Triermain
Survey'd the mound's rude front again;
And lo! the ruin had laid bare,
Hewn in the stone, a winding stair,
Whose moss'd and fractured steps might lend
The means the summit to ascend;
And by whose aid the brave De Vaux
Began to scale these magic rocks,

And soon a platform won,
Where, the wild witchery to close,
Within three lances length arose
The Castle of Saint John!
No misty phantom of the air,
No meteor-blazon'd show was there;
In morning splendour, full and fair,
The massive fortress shone.

XV.

Embattled high and proudly tower'd,
Shaded by pond'rous flankers, lower'd
The portal's gloomy way.
Though for six hundred years and more,
Its strength had brook'd the tempest's roar,
The scutcheon'd emblems that it bore
Had suffer'd no decay:
But from the eastern battlement
A turret had made sheer descent,
And down in recent ruin rent,

In the mid torrent lay.
Else, o'er the Castle's brow sublime,
Insults of violence or of time
Unfelt had pass'd away.
In shapeless characters of yore,
The gate this stern inscription bore.

XVI.

Inscription.

" Patience waits the destined day,
Strength can clear the cumber'd way.
Warrior, who hast waited long,
Firm of soul, of sinew strong,
It is given to thee to gaze
On the pile of ancient days.
Never mortal builder's hand
This enduring fabric plann'd;
Sign and sigil, word of power,
From the earth raised keep and tower.

View it o'er, and pace it round,
Rampart, turret, battled mound.
Dare no more! to cross the gate
Were to tamper with thy fate;
Strength and fortitude were vain,
View it o'er—and turn again."

XVII.

"That would I," said the Warrior bold,
"If that my frame were bent and old,
And my thin blood dropp'd slow and cold
As icicle in thaw;
But while my heart can feel it dance,
Blithe as the sparkling wine of France,
And this good arm wields sword or lance,
I mock these words of awe!"
He said; the wicket felt the sway
Of his strong hand, and straight gave way,
And with rude crash and jarring bray,
The rusty bolts withdraw;

But o'er the threshold as he strode,
And forward took the vaulted road,
An unseen arm, with force amain,
The ponderous gate flung close again,
And rusted bolt and bar
Spontaneous took their place once more,
While the deep arch with sullen roar
Return'd their surly jar.
"Now closed is the gin and the prey within,
By the Rood of Lanercost!
But he that would win the war-wolf's skin,
May rue him of his boast."—
Thus muttering, on the Warrior went,
By dubious light down steep descent.

XVIII.

Unbarr'd, unlock'd, unwatch'd, a port
Led to the Castle's outer court:
There the main fortress, broad and tall,
Spread its long range of bower and hall,

And towers of varied size,
Wrought with each ornament extreme,
That Gothic art, in wildest dream
Of fancy, could devise.
But full between the warrior's way
And the main portal-arch, there lay
An inner moat;
Nor bridge nor boat
Affords De Vaux the means to cross
The clear, profound, and silent fosse.
His arms aside in haste he flings,
Cuirass of steel and hauberk rings,
And down falls helm, and down the shield,
Rough with the dints of many a field.
Fair was his manly form, and fair
His keen dark eye, and close curl'd hair,
When,—all unarm'd, save that the brand
Of well-proved metal graced his hand,
With nought to fence his dauntless breast
But the close gipon's* under-vest,

* A sort of doublet, worn beneath the armour.

Whose sullied buff the sable stains
Of hauberk and of mail retains,—
Roland De Vaux upon the brim
Of the broad moat stood prompt to swim.

XIX.

Accouter'd thus he dared the tide,
And soon he reach'd the further side,
And enter'd soon the Hold,
And paced a hall, whose walls so wide
Were blazon'd all with feats of pride,
By warriors done of old.
In middle lists they counter'd here,
While trumpets seem'd to blow;
And there, in den or desart drear,
They quell'd gigantic foe,
Braved the fierce griffon in his ire,
Or faced the dragon's breath of fire.
Strange in their arms, and strange in face,
Heroes they seem'd of ancient race,

Whose deeds of arms, and race, and name,
Forgotten long by later fame,
Were here depicted to appal
Those of an age degenerate,
Whose bold intrusion braved their fate
In this enchanted hall.
For some short space, the venturous Knight
With these high marvels fed his sight;
Then sought the chamber's upper end,
Where three broad easy steps ascend
To an arch'd portal door,
In whose broad folding leaves of state
Was framed a wicket window-grate;
And ere he ventured more,
The gallant Knight took earnest view
The grated wicket-window through.

XX.

Oh for his arms! Of martial weed
Had never mortal Knight such need!—

He spied a stately gallery; all
Of snow-white marble was the wall,
The vaulting, and the floor;
And, contrast strange! on either hand
There stood array'd in sable band
Four Maids whom Afric bore;
And each a Lybian tyger led,
Held by as bright and frail a thread
As Lucy's golden hair,
For the leash that bound these monsters dread
Was but of gossamer.
Each Maiden's short barbaric vest
Left all unclosed the knee and breast,
And limbs of shapely jet;
White was their vest and turban's fold,
On arms and ancles rings of gold
In savage pomp were set;
A quiver on their shoulders lay,
And in their hand an assagay.
Such and so silent stood they there,
That Roland well nigh hoped

He saw a band of statues rare,
Station'd the gazer's soul to scare;
But, when the wicket oped,
Each griesly beast 'gan upward draw,
Roll'd his grim eye, and spread his claw,
Scented the air, and lick'd his jaw;
While these weird Maids, in Moorish tongue,
A wild and dismal warning sung.

XXI.

" Rash Adventurer, bear thee back!
Dread the spell of Dahomay!
Fear the race of Zaharak,
Daughters of the burning day!

" When the whirlwind's gusts are wheeling.
Our's it is the dance to braid;
Zarah's sands in pillars reeling,
Join the measure that we tread,

When the Moon hath don'd her cloak,
And the stars are red to see,
Shrill when pipes the sad Siroc,
Music meet for such as we.

" Where the shatter'd columns lie,
Shewing Carthage once had been,
If the wandering Santon's eye
Our mysterious rites hath seen,—
Oft he cons the prayer of death,
To the nations preaches doom,
' Azrael's Brand hath left the sheath !
Moslems, think upon the tomb !'—

" Our's the scorpion, our's the snake,
Our's the hydra of the fen,
Our's the tyger of the brake,
All that plagues the sons of men.
Our's the tempest's midnight wrack,
Pestilence that wastes by day—

Dread the race of Zaharak!
Fear the spell of Dahomay!"—

XXII.

Uncouth and strange the accents shrill
Rung those vaulted roofs among,
Long it was ere, faint and still,
Died the far-resounding song.
While yet the distant echoes roll,
The Warrior communed with his soul.
"When first I took this venturous quest,
I swore upon the rood,
Neither to stop, nor turn, nor rest,
For evil or for good.
My forward path, too well I ween,
Lies yonder fearful ranks between;
For man unarm'd, 'tis bootless hope
With tygers and with fiends to cope—
Yet, if I turn, what waits me there,
Save famine dire and fell despair?—

Other conclusion let me try,
Since, chuse howe'er I list, I die.
Forward, lies faith and knightly fame;
Behind, are perjury and shame.
In life or death I hold my word!"—
With that he drew his trusty sword,
Caught down a banner from the wall,
And enter'd thus the fearful hall.

XXIII.

On high each wayward Maiden threw
Her swarthy arm, with wild halloo!
On either side a tyger sprung—
Against the leftward foe he flung
The ready banner, to engage
With tangling folds the brutal rage;
The right-hand monster in mid air
He struck so fiercely and so fair,
Through gullet and through spinal bone
The trenchant blade hath sheerly gone.

His grisly brethren ramp'd and yell'd,
But the slight leash their rage withheld,
Whilst, 'twixt their ranks, the dangerous road
Firmly, though swift, the champion strode.
Safe to the gallery's bound he drew,
Safe past an open portal through;
And when 'gainst followers he flung
The gate, judge if the echoes rung!
Onward his daring course he bore,
While, mix'd with dying growl and roar,
Wild jubilee and loud hurra
Pursued him on his venturous way.

XXIV.

"Hurra, hurra! Our watch is done!
We hail once more the tropic sun.
Pallid beams of northern day,
Farewell, farewell! Hurra, hurra!

"Five hundred years o'er this cold glen
Hath the pale sun come round agen;

Foot of man, till now, hath ne'er
Dared to cross the Hall of Fear.

" Warrior ! thou, whose dauntless heart
Gives us from our ward to part,
Be as strong in future trial,
Where resistance is denial.

" Now for Afric's glowing sky,
Zwenga wide and Atlas high,
Zaharak and Dahomay !——
Mount the winds ! Hurra, hurra !"—

XXV.

The wizard song at distance died
As if in ether borne astray,
While through waste halls and chambers wide
The Knight pursued his steady way,
Till to a lofty dome he came,
That flash'd with such a brilliant flame,

As if the wealth of all the world
Were there in rich confusion hurl'd.
For here the gold, in sandy heaps,
With duller earth incorporate sleeps;
Was there in ingots piled, and there
Coin'd badge of empery it bare;
Yonder, huge bars of silver lay,
Dimm'd by the diamond's neighbouring ray,
Like the pale moon in morning day;
And in the midst four Maidens stand,
The daughters of some distant land.
Their hue was of the dark-red dye,
That fringes oft a thunder-sky;
Their hands palmetto baskets bare,
And cotton fillets bound their hair;
Slim was their form, their mien was shy,
To earth they bent the humbled eye,
Folded their arms, and suppliant kneel'd,
And thus their proffer'd gifts reveal'd.

XXVI.

CHORUS.

" See the treasures Merlin piled,
Portion meet for Arthur's child.
Bathe in Wealth's unbounded stream,
Wealth that Avarice ne'er could dream !"

FIRST MAIDEN.

" See these clots of virgin gold !
Sever'd from the sparry mould,
Nature's mystic alchemy
In the mine thus bade them lie ;
And their orient smile can win
Kings to stoop, and saints to sin."

SECOND MAIDEN.

" See these pearls, that long have slept ;
These were tears by Naiads wept

For the loss of Marinel.
Tritons in the silver shell
Treasured them, till hard and white
As the teeth of Amphitrite."—

THIRD MAIDEN.

" Does a livelier hue delight ?
Here are rubies blazing bright,
Here the emerald's fairy green,
And the topaz glows between ;
Here their varied hues unite
In the changeful chrysolite."—

FOURTH MAIDEN.

" Leave these gems of poorer shine,
Leave them all, and look on mine !
While their glories I expand,
Shade thine eye-brows with thy hand.
Mid-day sun and diamond's blaze
Blind the rash beholder's gaze."—

CHORUS.

" Warrior, seize the splendid store;
Would 'twere all our mountains bore!
We should ne'er in future story,
Read, Peru, thy perish'd glory!"——

XXVII.

Calmly and unconcern'd, the Knight
Waved aside the treasures bright:
" Gentle Maidens, rise, I pray!
Bar not thus my destined way.
Let these boasted brilliant toys
Braid the hair of girls and boys!
Bid your streams of gold expand
O'er proud London's thristy land.
De Vaux of wealth saw never need,
Save to purvey him arms and steed,
And all the ore he deign'd to hoard
Inlays his helm, and hilts his sword."—

Thus gently parting from their hold,
He left, unmoved, the dome of gold.

XXVIII.

And now the morning sun was high,
De Vaux was weary, faint, and dry;
When lo! a plashing sound he hears,
A gladsome signal that he nears
Some frolic water-run;
And soon he reach'd a court-yard square,
Where, dancing in the sultry air,
Toss'd high aloft, a fountain fair
Was sparkling in the sun.
On right and left, a fair arcade,
In long perspective view display'd
Alleys and bowers, for sun or shade;
But, full in front, a door,
Low-brow'd and dark, seem'd as it led
To the lone dwelling of the dead,
Whose memory was no more.

Here stopp'd De Vaux an instant's space,
To bathe his parched lips and face,
And mark'd with well-pleased eye,
Refracted on the fountain stream,
In rainbow hues the dazzling beam,
Of that gay summer sky.
His senses felt a mild controul,
Like that which lulls the weary soul,
From contemplation high
Relaxing, when the ear receives
The music that the green-wood leaves
Make to the breezes' sigh.

XXX.

And oft in such a dreamy mood,
The half-shut eye can frame
Fair apparitions in the wood,
As if the Nymphs of field and flood
In gay procession came.

Are these of such fantastic mould,
Seen distant down the fair arcade,
These Maids enlink'd in sister-fold,
Who, late at bashful distance staid,
Now tripping from the greenwood shade,
Nearer the musing champion draw,
And, in a pause of seeming awe,
Again stand doubtful now?—
Ah, that sly pause of witching powers!
That seems to say, "To please be ours,
Be yours to tell us how."—
Their hue was of the golden glow
That suns of Candahar bestow,
O'er which in slight suffusion flows
A frequent tinge of paly rose;
Their limbs were fashion'd fair and free,
In nature's justest symmetry,
And wreath'd with flowers, with odours graced,
Their raven ringlets reach'd the waist;
In eastern pomp, its gilding pale
The hennah lent each shapely nail,

And the dark sumah gave the eye
More liquid and more lustrous dye.
The spotless veil of misty lawn,
In studied disarrangement, drawn
The form and bosom o'er,
To win the eye, or tempt the touch,
For modesty shew'd all too much—
Too much—yet promised more.

XXXI.

" Gentle Knight, awhile delay,"
Thus they sung, " thy toilsome way,
While we pay the duty due
To our Master and to you.
Over Avarice, over Fear,
Love triumphant led thee here;
Warrior, list to us, for we
Are slaves to Love, are friends to thee.

" Though no treasured gems have we,
To proffer on the bended knee,

Though we boast nor arm nor heart,
For the assagay or dart,
Swains have given each simple girl
Ruby lip and teeth of pearl;
Or, if dangers more you prize,
Flatterers find them in our eyes.

" Stay, then, gentle Warrior, stay,
Rest till evening steal on day;
Stay, O stay!—in yonder bowers
We will braid thy locks with flowers,
Spread the feast and fill the wine,
Charm thy ear with sounds divine,
Weave our dances till delight
Yield to languor, day to night.

" Then shall she you most approve,
Sing the lays that best you love,
Soft thy mossy couch shall spread,
Watch thy pillow, prop thy head,

Till the weary night be o'er—
Gentle Warrior, would'st thou more?
Would'st thou more, fair Warrior,—she
Is slave to Love and slave to thee."—

XXXII.

O do not hold it for a crime
In the bold hero of my rhyme,
For stoic look,
And meet rebuke,
He lack'd the heart or time;
As round the band of syrens trip,
He kiss'd one damsel's laughing lip,
And press'd another's proffer'd hand,
Spoke to them all in accents bland,
But broke their magic circle through;
"Kind Maids," he said, "adieu, adieu!
My fate, my fortune, forward lies."—
He said, and vanish'd from their eyes;
But, as he dared that darksome way,
Still heard behind their lovely lay:

" Fair Flower of Courtesy, depart !
Go, where the feelings of the heart
With the warm pulse in concord move ;
Go, where Virtue sanctions Love !"—

XXXIII.

Downward De Vaux through darksome ways
And ruin'd vaults has gone,
Till issue from their wilder'd maze,
Or safe retreat, seem'd none.
And e'en the dismal path he strays
Grew worse as he went on.
For cheerful sun, for living air,
Foul vapours rise and mine-fires glare,
Whose fearful light the dangers show'd
That dogg'd him on that dreadful road.
Deep pits, and lakes of waters dun,
They shew'd, but shew'd not how to shun.
These scenes of desolate despair,
These smothering clouds of poison'd air,

How gladly had De Vaux exchanged,
Though 'twere to face yon tigers ranged!
Nay, soothful bards have said,
So perilous his state seem'd now,
He wish'd him under arbour bough
With Asia's willing maid.
When, joyful sound! at distance near
A trumpet flourish'd loud and clear,
And as it ceased, a lofty lay
Seem'd thus to chide his lagging way.

XXXIV.

"Son of Honour, theme of story,
Think on the reward before ye!
Danger, darkness, toil despise;
'Tis ambition bids thee rise.

"He, that would her heights ascend,
Many a weary step must wend;
Hand and foot and knee he tries;
Thus Ambition's minions rise.

" Lag not now, though rough the way,
Fortune's mood brooks no delay;
Grasp the boon that's spread before ye,
Monarch's power, and Conqueror's glory!"—

It ceased. Advancing on the sound,
A steep ascent the Wanderer found,
And then a turret stair:
Nor climb'd he far its steepy round
Till fresher blew the air,
And next a welcome glimpse was given,
That cheer'd him with the light of heaven.
At length his toil had won
A lofty hall with trophies dress'd,
Where, as to greet imperial guest,
Four Maidens stood, whose crimson vest
Was bound with golden zone.

XXXV.

Of Europe seem'd the damsels all;
The first a nymph of lively Gaul,

Whose easy step and laughing eye
Her borrow'd air of awe belie;
The next a maid of Spain,
Dark-eyed, dark-hair'd, sedate, yet bold;
White ivory skin and tress of gold,
Her shy and bashful comrade told
For daughter of Almaine.
These Maidens bore a royal robe,
With crown, with sceptre, and with globe,
Emblems of empery;
The fourth a space behind them stood,
And leant upon a harp, in mood
Of minstrel ecstacy.
Of merry England she, in dress
Like ancient British druidess;
Her hair an azure fillet bound,
Her graceful vesture swept the ground,
And, in her hand display'd,
A crown did that fourth Maiden hold,
But unadorn'd with gems and gold,
Of glossy laurel made.

XXXVI.

At once to brave De Vaux knelt down
These foremost Maidens three,
And proffer'd sceptre, robe, and crown,
Liegedom and seignorie
O'er many a region wide and fair,
Destined, they said, for Arthur's heir;
But homage would he none:—
"Rather," he said, "De Vaux would ride
A Warden of the Border-side,
In plate and mail, than, robed in pride,
A monarch's empire own;
Rather, far rather, would he be
A free-born Knight of England free,
Than sit on Despot's throne."
So pass'd he on, when that fourth Maid,
As starting from a trance,
Upon the harp her finger laid;

Her magic touch the chords obey'd,
Their soul awaked at once!

SONG OF THE FOURTH MAIDEN.

"Quake to your foundations deep,
Stately Towers, and banner'd Keep,
Bid your vaulted echoes moan,
As the dreaded step they own.

"Fiends, that wait on Merlin's spell,
Hear the foot-fall! mark it well!
Spread your dusky wings abroad,
Boune ye for your homeward road!

"It is HIS, the first who e'er
Dared the dismal Hall of Fear;
HIS, who hath the snares defied
Spread by Pleasure, Wealth, and Pride

"Quake to your foundations deep,
Bastion huge, and Turret steep!

Tremble Keep, and totter Tower!
This is Gyneth's waking hour."——

XXXVII.

Thus while she sung, the venturous Knight
Has reach'd a bower, where milder light
Through crimson curtains fell;
Such soften'd shade the hill receives,
Her purple veil when twilight leaves
Upon its western swell.
That bower, the gazer to bewitch,
Had wondrous store of rare and rich
As e'er was seen with eye;
For there by magic skill, I wis,
Form of each thing that living is
Was limn'd in proper dye.
All seem'd to sleep—the timid hare
On form, the stag upon his lair,
The eagle in her eyrie fair
Between the earth and sky.

But what of pictured rich and rare
Could win De Vaux's eye-glance, where,
Deep slumbering in the fatal chair,
He saw King Arthur's child!
Doubt, and anger, and dismay,
From her brow had pass'd away,
Forgot was that fell tourney-day,
For, as she slept, she smiled.
It seem'd that the repentant Seer
Her sleep of many an hundred year
With gentle dreams beguiled.

XXXVIII.

That form of maiden loveliness,
'Twixt childhood and 'twixt youth,
That ivory chair, that sylvan dress,
The arms and ancles bare, express
Of Lyulph's tale the truth.
Still upon her garment's hem
Vanoc's blood made purple gem,

And the warder of command
Cumber'd still her sleeping hand;
Still her dark locks dishevell'd flow
From net of pearl o'er breast of snow;
And so fair the slumberer seems,
That De Vaux impeach'd his dreams,
Vapid all and void of might,
Hiding half her charms from sight.
Motionless a while he stands,
Folds his arms and clasps his hands,
Trembling in his fitful joy,
Doubtful how he shall destroy
Long-enduring spell;
Doubtful too, when slowly rise
Dark-fringed lids of Gyneth's eyes,
What these eyes shall tell.
"St George! St Mary! can it be,
That they will kindly look on me!"--

XXXIX.

Gently, lo! the Warrior kneels,
Soft that lovely hand he steals,
Soft to kiss, and soft to clasp—
But the warder leaves her grasp;
Lightning flashes, rolls the thunder!
Gyneth startles from her sleep,
Totters tower, and trembles keep,
Burst the Castle walls asunder!
Fierce and frequent were the shocks,
Melt the magic halls away——
——But beneath their mystic rocks,
In the arms of bold De Vaux,
Safe the Princess lay!
Safe and free from magic power,
Blushing like the rose's flower
Opening to the day;

And round the Champion's brows were bound
The crown that Druidess had wound,
Of the green laurel-bay.
And this was what remain'd of all
The wealth of each enchanted hall,
The Garland and the Dame :—
But where should Warrior seek the meed,
Due to high worth for daring deed,
Except from LOVE and FAME !

CONCLUSION.

I.

My Lucy, when the maid is won,
The Minstrel's task, thou know'st, is done;
And to require of bard
That to the dregs his tale should run,
Were ordinance too hard.
Our lovers, briefly be it said,
Wedded as lovers wont to wed,
When tale or play is o'er;
Lived long and blest, loved fond and true,
And saw a numerous race renew
The honours that they bore.

Know, too, that when a pilgrim strays,
In morning mist or evening maze,
Along the mountain lone,
That fairy fortress often mocks
His gaze upon the castled rocks
Of the Valley of Saint John;
But never man since brave De Vaux
The charmed portal won.
'Tis now a vain illusive show,
That melts whene'er the sunbeams glow
Or the fresh breeze hath blown.

II.

But see, my love, where far below
Our lingering wheels are moving slow,
The whiles up-gazing still,
Our menials eye our steepy way,
Marvelling, perchance, what whim can stay
Our steps when eve is sinking grey
On this gigantic hill.

So think the vulgar—Life and time
Ring all their joys in one dull chime
Of luxury and ease;
And O! beside these simple knaves,
How many better born are slaves
To such coarse joys as these,
Dead to the nobler sense that glows
When nature's grander scenes unclose!
But, Lucy, we will love them yet,
The mountain's misty coronet,
The green wood and the wold;
And love the more, that of their maze
Adventure high of other days
By ancient bards is told,
Bringing, perchance, like my poor tale,
Some moral truth in fiction's veil:
Nor love them less, that o'er the hill
The evening breeze, as now, comes chill;—
My love shall wrap her warm,

And, fearless of the slippery way,
While safe she trips the heathy brae,
Shall hang on Arthur's arm.

THE END OF TRIERMAIN.

NOTES.

NOTES.

Like Collins, ill-starr'd name!—P. 200. l. 7.

Collins, according to Johnson, "by indulging some peculiar habits of thought, was eminently delighted with those flights of imagination which pass the bounds of nature, and to which the mind is reconciled only by a passive acquiescence in popular traditions. He loved fairies, genii, giants, and monsters; he delighted to rove through the meanders of enchantment, to gaze on the magnificence of golden palaces, to repose by the water-falls of Elysian gardens."

The Baron of Triermain.—P. 203. l. 2.

Triermain was a fief of the Barony of Gilsland, in Cumberland; it was possessed by a Saxon family at the time of the Conquest, but, "after the death of Gilmore, Lord of Tryermaine and Torcrossock, Hubert Vaux gave Tryermaine and Torcrossock to his second son, Ranulph Vaux, which

Ranulph afterwards became heir to his elder brother Robert, the founder of Lanercost, who died without issue. Ranulph, being Lord of all Gilsland, gave Gilmore's lands to his own younger son, named Roland, and let the Barony descend to his eldest son Robert, son of Ranulph. Roland had issue Alexander, and he Ranulph, after whom succeeded Robert, and they were named Rolands successively, that were lords thereof, until the reign of Edward the Fourth. That house gave for arms, Vert, a bend dexter, chequy or and gules."—BURN'S *Antiquities of Westmoreland and Cumberland, vol. II. p.* 482.

This branch of Vaux, with its collateral allianees, is now represented by the family of Braddyl of Conishead Priory, in the county palatine of Lancaster; for it appears that about the time above-mentioned, the house of Triermaine was united to its kindred family Vaux of Caterlen, and, by marriage with the heiress of Delamore and Leybourne, became the representative of those ancient and noble families. The male line failing in John de Vaux, about the year 1665, his daughter and heiress, Mabel, married Christopher Richmond, Esq. of Highhead Castle, in the county of Cumberland, descended from an ancient family of that name, lords of Corby Castle, in the same county, soon after the Conquest, and which they alienated about the 15th of Edward the Second, to Andrea de Harela, Earl of Carlisle. Of this family was Sir Thomas de Raigemont, (miles auratus) in the reign of King Edward the First, who appears to have greatly distinguished himself at the siege of Kaerlaveroc, with William

Baron of Leybourne. In an ancient heraldic poem now extant, and preserved in the British Museum, describing that siege, his arms are stated to be, Or, 2 Bars Gemelles Gules, and a Chief Or, the same borne by his descendants at the present day. The Richmonds removed to their Castle of Highhead in the reign of Henry the Eighth, when the then representative of the family married Margaret, daughter of Sir Hugh Lowther, by the Lady Dorothy de Clifford, only child by a second marriage of Henry Lord Clifford, great grandson of John Lord Clifford, by Elizabeth Percy, daughter of Henry (surnamed Hotspur) by Elizabeth Mortimer, which said Elizabeth was daughter of Edward Mortimer, third Earl of Marche, by Philippa, sole daughter and heiress of Lionel, Duke of Clarence.

The third in descent from the above-mentioned John Richmond, became the representative of the families of Vaux, of Triermaine, Caterlen, and Torcrossock, by his marriage with Mabel de Vaux, the heiress of them. His grandson Henry Richmond died without issue, leaving five sisters coheiresses, four of whom married; but Margaret, who married William Gale, Esq. of Whitehaven, was the only one who had male issue surviving. She had a son, and a daughter married to Henry Curwen of Workington, Esq., who represented the county of Cumberland for many years in Parliament, and by her had a daughter, married to John Christian, Esq., (now Curwen.) John, son and heir of William Gale, married Sarah, daughter and heiress of Christopher Wilson of Bard-

sea Hall, in the county of Lancaster, by Margaret, aunt and coheiress of Thomas Braddyl, Esq., of Braddyl, and Conishead Priory, in the same county, and had issue four sons and two daughters. 1st. William Wilson, died an infant; 2d. Wilson, who upon the death of his cousin, Thomas Braddyl, without issue, succeeded to his estates, and took the name of Braddyl, in pursuance of his will, by the king's sign manuel; 3d. William, died young; and, 4th. Henry Richmond, a lieutenant-general of the army, married Sarah, daughter of the Rev. R. Baldwin; Margaret married Richard Greaves Townley, Esq. of Fulbourne, in the county of Cambridge, and of Bellfield, in the county of Lancaster; Sarah married to George Bigland of Bigland Hall, in the same county.

Wilson Braddyl, eldest son of John Gale, and grandson of Margaret Richmond, married Jane, daughter and heiress of Matthias Gale, Esq. of Catgill Hall, in the county of Cumberland, by Jane, daughter and heiress of the Rev. S. Bennet, D. D.; and, as the eldest surviving male branch of the families above-mentioned, he quarters, in addition to his own, their paternal coats in the following order, as appears by the records in the College of Arms.

1st. Argent, a fess azure, between 3 saltiers of the same, charged with an anchor between 2 lions heads erazed, or,—Gale.

2d. Or, 2 bars gemelles gules, and a chief or,—Richmond.

3d. Or, a fess chequey, or and gules between 9 gerbes gules, —Vaux of Caterlen.

4th. Gules, a fess chequey, or and gules between 6 gerbes or,—Vaux of Torcrossock.

5th. * Argent, a bend chequey, or and gules, for Vaux of Triermain.

6th. Gules, a cross patonce, or, Delamore.

7th. Gules, 6 lions rampant argent, 3, 2, and 1, Leybourne. †

And his who sleeps at Dunmailraise.—P. 208. l. 4.

Dunmailraise is one of the grand passes from Cumberland into Westmoreland. It takes its name from a cairn, or pile of stones, erected, it is said, to the memory of Dunmail, the last King of Cumberland.

———*Penrith's Table Round.*—P. 209. l. 7.

A circular entrenchment, about half a mile from Penrith, is thus popularly termed. The circle within the ditch is about one hundred and sixty paces in circumference, with openings, or approaches, directly opposite to each other. As the ditch is on the inner side, it could not be intended for the purpose of defence, and it has reasonably been conjectured, that the inclosure was designed for the solemn exercise of feats of chivalry ; and the embankment around for the convenience of the spectators.

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* Not vert, as stated by Burn.

† This more detailed genealogy of the family of Triermain, was obligingly sent to the author, by Major Braddyll of Conishead Priory.

Mayburgh's mound and stones of power.—P. 209. l. 9.

Higher up the river Eamont than Arthur's Round Table, is a prodigious inclosure of great antiquity, formed by a collection of stones upon the top of a gently sloping hill, called Mayburgh. In the plain which it incloses there stands erect an unhewn stone of twelve feet in height. Two similar masses are said to have been destroyed during the memory of man. The whole appears to be a monument of druidical times.

Though never sunbeam could discern
The surface of that sable tarn.—P. 212. l. 15.

The small lake called Scales-tarn lies so deeply embosomed in the recesses of the huge mountain called Saddleback, more poetically Glaramara, is of such great depth, and so completely hidden from the sun, that it is said its beams never reach it, and that the reflection of the stars may be seen at mid-day.

————*Tintadgel's spear.*—P. 220. l. 16.

Tintadgel Castle, in Cornwall, is reported to have been the birth-place of King Arthur.

——*Caliburn in cumbrous length.*—P. 220. l. 18.

This was the name of King Arthur's well-known sword, sometimes also called Excalibar.

From Arthur's hand the goblet flew.—P. 239. l. 5.

The author has an indistinct recollection of an adventure somewhat similar to that which is here ascribed to King Arthur, having befallen one of the ancient kings of Denmark. The horn in which the burning liquor was presented to that monarch, is said still to be preserved in the Royal Museum at Copenhagen.

Nor tower nor donjon could he spy,
Darkening against the morning sky.—P. 239. l. 17, 18.

——"We now gained a view of the Vale of St John's, a very narrow dell, hemmed in by mountains, through which a small brook makes many meanderings, washing little inclosures of grass-ground, which stretch up the rising of the hills. In the widest part of the dale you are struck with the appearance of an ancient ruined castle, which seems to stand upon the summit of a little mount, the mountains around forming an amphitheatre. This massive bulwark shews a front of various towers, and makes an awful, rude, and Gothic appearance, with its lofty turrets and ragged battlements; we traced the galleries, the bending arches, the buttresses. The greatest antiquity stands characterized in its architecture; the inhabitants near it assert it is an antediluvian structure.

"The traveller's curiosity is roused, and he prepares to make a nearer approach, when that curiosity is put upon the rack by his being assured, that, if he advances, certain genii

who govern the place, by virtue of their supernatural art and necromancy, will strip it of all its beauties, and by enchantment, transform the magic walls. The vale seems adapted for the habitation of such beings; its gloomy recesses and retirements look like haunts of evil spirits. There was no delusion in the report; we were soon convinced of its truth; for this piece of antiquity, so venerable and noble in its aspect, as we drew near changed its figure, and proved no other than a shaken massive pile of rocks, which stand in the midst of this little vale, disunited from the adjoining mountains, and have so much the real form and resemblance of a castle, that they bear the name of the Castle Rocks of St John."—HUTCHINSON'S *Excursion to the Lakes*, p. 121.

The Saxons to subjection brought.—P. 242. l. 10.

Arthur is said to have defeated the Saxons in twelve pitched battles, and to have achieved the other feats alluded to in the text.

There Morolt of the iron mace, &c.—P. 242. l. 17.

The characters named in the following stanza are all of them more or less distinguished in the romances which treat of King Arthur and his Round Table, and their names are strung together according to the established custom of minstrels upon such occasions; for example, in the ballad of the Marriage of Sir Gawaine:

Sir Lancelot, Sir Stephen bolde,
They rode with them that daye,
And, foremost of the companye,
There rode the stewarde Kaye.

Soe did Sir Banier, and Sir Bore,
And eke Sir Garratte keen,
Sir Tristram too, that gentle knight,
To the forest fresh and greene.

And Lancelot, that evermore
Look'd stol'n-wise on the queen.—P. 243. l. 10, 11.

Upon this delicate subject hear Richard Robinson, citizen of London, in his Assertion of King Arthur:

"But as it is a thing sufficiently apparent that she (Gueneyer, wife of King Arthur) was beautiful, so it is a thing doubted whether she was chaste, yea or no. Truly, so far as I can with honestie, I would spare the impayred honour and fame of noble women. But yet the truth of the historie pluckes me by the eare, and willeth not onely, but commandeth me to declare what the ancients have deemed of her. To wrestle or contend with so great authoritie were indeede unto me a controversie, and that greate."—*Assertion of King Arthure. Imprinted by John Wolfe, London,* 1582.

There were two who loved their neighbours' wives,
And one who loved his own.—P. 248. l. 9, 10.

In our forefathers' tyme, when papistrie, as a standyng poole, covered and overflowed all England, fewe books were

read in our tongue, savyng certaine bookes of chevalrie, as they said, for pastime and pleasure; which, as some say, were made in the monasteries, by idle monks or wanton chanons. As one for example, *La Morte d'Arthure;* the whole pleasure of which book standeth in two speciall poynts, in open manslaughter and bold bawdrye; in which booke they be counted the noblest knightes that do kill most men without any quarrell, and commit fowlest adoulteries by sutlest shiftes; as Sir Launcelot, with the wife of King Arthur, his master; Sir Tristram, with the wife of King Marke, his uncle; Sir Lamerocke, with the wife of King Lote, that was his own aunt. This is good stuffe for wise men to laugh at, or honest men to take pleasure at, yet I know when God's Bible was banished the court, and La Morte d'Arthure received into the prince's chamber.—ASCHAM'S *Schoolmaster.*

——— *valiant Carodac,*
Who won the cup of gold.—P. 248. l. 13, 14.

See the comic tale of the Boy and the Mantle, in the third volume of Percy's Reliques of Ancient Poetry, from the Breton or Norman original of which Ariosto is supposed to have taken his Tale of the Enchanted Cup.

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FRAGMENTS.

THE POACHER.

Welcome, grave Stranger, to our green retreats,
Where health with exercise and freedom meets!
Thrice welcome, Sage, whose philosophic plan
By Nature's limits metes the rights of man;
Generous as he, who now for freedom bawls,
Now gives full value for true Indian shawls;
O'er court, o'er custom-house, his shoe who flings,
Now bilks excisemen, and now bullies kings.
Like his, I ween, thy comprehensive mind
Holds laws as mouse-traps baited for mankind;
Thine eye, applausive, each sly vermin sees,
That baulks the snare, yet battens on the cheese;

Thine ear has heard, with scorn instead of awe,
Our buckskin'd justices expound the law,
Wire-draw the acts that fix for wires the pain,
And for the netted partridge noose the swain;
And thy vindictive arm would fain have broke
The last light fetter of the feudal yoke,
To give the denizens of wood and wild,
Nature's free race, to each her free-born child.
Hence hast thou mark'd, with grief, fair London's race
Mock'd with the boon of one poor Easter chace,
And long'd to send them forth as free as when
Pour'd o'er Chantilly the Parisian train,
When musquet, pistol, blunderbuss, combined,
And scarce the field-pieces were left behind!
A squadron's charge each leveret's heart dismay'd,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanitè approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnized the day,
And Seine re-echo'd *Vive la Libertè!*

But mad *Citoyen*, meek *Monsieur* again,
With some few added links resumes his chain;
Then since such scenes to France no more are known,
Come, view with me a hero of thine own!
One, whose free actions vindicate the cause
Of sylvan liberty o'er feudal laws.

Seek we yon glades, where the proud oak o'ertops
Wide-waving seas of birch and hazel copse,
Leaving between deserted isles of land,
Where stunted heath is patch'd with ruddy sand;
And lonely on the waste the yew is seen,
Or straggling hollies spread a brighter green.
Here, little worn, and winding dark and steep,
Our scarce-mark'd path descends yon dingle deep:
Follow—but heedful, cautious of a trip,—
In earthly mire philosophy may slip.
Step slow and wary o'er that swampy stream,
Till, guided by the charcoal's smothering steam,

We reach the frail yet barricaded door
Of hovel form'd for poorest of the poor;
No hearth the fire, no vent the smoke receives,
The walls are wattles, and the covering leaves;
For, if such hut, our forest statutes say,
Rise in the progress of one night and day,
(Though placed where still the Conqueror's hests o'erawe,
And his son's stirrup shines the badge of law,)
The builder claims the unenviable boon,
To tenant dwelling, framed as slight and soon
As wigwam wild, that shrouds the native frore
On the bleak coast of frost-barr'd Labrador.*

---

* Such is the law in the New Forest, Hampshire, tending greatly to increase the various settlements of thieves, smugglers, and deer-stealers, who infest it. In the forest courts the presiding judge wears as a badge of office an antique stirrup, said to have been that of William Rufus. See Mr William Rose's spirited poem, entitled "The Red King."

Approach, and through the unlatticed window peep—
Nay, shrink not back, the inmate is asleep;
Sunk mid yon sordid blankets, till the sun
Stoop to the west, the plunderer's toils are done.
Loaded and primed, and prompt for desperate hand,
Rifle and fowling-piece beside him stand,
While round the hut are in disorder laid
The tools and booty of his lawless trade;
For force or fraud, resistance or escape,
The crow, the saw, the bludgeon, and the crape.
His pilfer'd powder in yon nook he hoards,
And the filch'd lead the church's roof affords—
(Hence shall the rector's congregation fret,
That while his sermon's dry, his walls are wet.)
The fish-spear barb'd, the sweeping net are there,
Doe-hides, and pheasant plumes, and skins of hare,
Cordage for toils, and wiring for the snare.
Barter'd for game from chace or warren won,
Yon cask holds moonlight,* run when moon was none;

* A cant name for smuggled spirits.

And late-snatch'd spoils lie stow'd in hutch apart,
To wait the associate higgler's evening cart.

Look on his pallet foul, and mark his rest:
What scenes perturb'd are acting in his breast!
His sable brow is wet and wrung with pain,
And his dilated nostril toils in vain,
For short and scant the breath each effort draws,
And 'twixt each effort Nature claims a pause.
Beyond the loose and sable neck-cloth stretch'd,
His sinewy throat seems by convulsions twitch'd,
While the tongue faulters, as to utterance loth,
Sounds of dire import—watch-word, threat and oath.
Though, stupified by toil and drugg'd with gin,
The body sleep, the restless guest within
Now plies on wood and wold his lawless trade,
Now in the fangs of justice wakes dismay'd.—

" Was that wild start of terror and despair,
Those bursting eye-balls, and that wilder'd air,
Signs of compunction for a murder'd hare?

Do the locks bristle and the eye-brows arch,
For grouse or partridge massacred in March ?"

No, scoffer, no ! Attend, and mark with awe,
There is no wicket in the gate of law !
He, that would e'er so slightly set ajar
That awful portal, must undo each bar ;
Tempting occasion, habit, passion, pride,
Will join to storm the breach, and force the barrier wide.

That ruffian, whom true men avoid and dread,
Whom bruisers, poachers, smugglers, call Black Ned,
Was Edward Mansell once ;—the lightest heart,
That ever play'd on holiday his part !
The leader he in every Christmas game,
The harvest feast grew blither when he came,
And liveliest on the chords the bow did glance,
When Edward named the tune and led the dance.
Kind was his heart, his passions quick and strong,
Hearty his laugh, and jovial was his song ;

And if he loved a gun, his father swore,
" 'Twas but a trick of youth would soon be o'er,
Himself had done the same some thirty years before."

But he, whose humours spurn law's awful yoke,
Must herd with those by whom law's bonds are broke.
The common dread of justice soon allies
The clown, who robs the warren or excise,
With sterner felons train'd to act more dread,
Even with the wretch by whom his fellow bled.
Then,—as in plagues the foul contagions pass,
Leavening and festering the corrupted mass,—
Guilt leagues with guilt, while mutual motives draw,
Their hope impunity, their fear the law;
Their foes, their friends, their rendezvous the same,
Till the revenue baulk'd, or pilfer'd game,
Flesh the young culprit, and example leads
To darker villainy, and direr deeds.

Wild howl'd the wind the forest glades along,
And oft the owl renew'd her dismal song;

Around the spot where erst he felt the wound,
Red William's spectre walk'd his midnight round.
When o'er the swamp he cast his blighting look,
From the green marshes of the stagnant brook
The bittern's sullen shout the sedges shook!
The wading moon, with storm-presaging gleam,
Now gave and now withheld her doubtful beam;
The old Oak stoop'd his arms, then flung them high,
Bellowing and groaning to the troubled sky—
'Twas then, that, couch'd amid the brushwood sere,
In Malwood-walk young Mansell watch'd the deer:
The fattest buck received his deadly shot—
The watchful keeper heard, and sought the spot.
Stout were their hearts, and stubborn was their strife,
O'erpower'd at length the Outlaw drew his knife!
Next morn a corpse was found upon the fell—
The rest his waking agony may tell!

SONG.

Oh, say not, my love, with that mortified air,
That your spring-time of pleasure is flown,
Nor bid me to maids that are younger repair,
For those raptures that still are thine own.

Though April his temples may wreathe with the vine,
Its tendrils in infancy curl'd,
'Tis the ardour of August matures us the wine
Whose life-blood enlivens the world.

Though thy form, that was fashion'd as light as a fay's,
Has assumed a proportion more round,
And thy glance, that was bright as a falcon's at gaze,
Looks soberly now on the ground,—

Enough, after absence to meet me again,
Thy steps still with ecstacy move ;
Enough, that those dear sober glances retain
For me the kind language of love !

HAROLD THE DAUNTLESS.

A POEM,

IN SIX CANTOS.

HAROLD THE DAUNTLESS.

INTRODUCTION.

THERE is a mood of mind we all have known,
On drowsy eve, or dark and low'ring day,
When the tired spirits lose their sprightly tone,
And nought can chase the lingering hours away.
Dull on our soul falls Fancy's dazzling ray,
And Wisdom holds his steadier torch in vain,
Obscured the painting seems, mistuned the lay,
Nor dare we of our listless load complain,
For who for sympathy may seek that cannot tell of pain?

The jolly sportsman knows such drearihood,
When bursts in deluge the autumnal rain,
Clouding that morn which threats the heath-cock's brood;
Of such, in summer's drought, the anglers plain,
Who hope the soft mild southern shower in vain;
But, more than all, the discontented fair,
Whom father stern, and sterner aunt, restrain
From county-ball, or race occurring rare,
While all her friends around their vestments gay prepare.

Ennui!—or, as our mothers call'd thee, Spleen!
To thee we owe full many a rare device;—
Thine is the sheaf of painted cards, I ween,
The rolling billiard-ball, the rattling dice,
The turning lathe for framing gimcrack nice;
The amateur's blotch'd pallet thou may'st claim,
Retort, and airpump, threatening frogs and mice,
(Murders disguised by philosophic name,)
And much of trifling grave, and much of buxom game.

Then of the books, to catch thy drowsy glance
Compiled, what bard the catalogue may quote!
Plays, poems, novels, never read but once;—
But not of such the tale fair Edgeworth wrote,
That bears thy name, and is thine antidote;
And not of such the strain my Thomson sung,
Delicious dreams inspiring by his note,
What time to Indolence his harp he strung;—
Oh! might my lay be rank'd that happier list among!

Each hath his refuge whom thy cares assail.
For me, I love my study-fire to trim,
And con right vacantly some idle tale,
Displaying on the couch each listless limb,
Till on the drowsy page the lights grow dim,
And doubtful slumber half supplies the theme;
While antique shapes of knight and giant grim,
Damsel and dwarf, in long procession gleam,
And the Romancer's tale becomes the Reader's dream.

'Tis thus my malady I well may bear,
Albeit outstretch'd, like Pope's own Paridel,
Upon the rack of a too-easy chair;
And find, to cheat the time, a powerful spell
In old romaunts of errantry that tell,
Or later legends of the Fairy-folk,
Or oriental tale of Afrite fell,
Of Genii, Talisman, and broad-wing'd Roc,
Though taste may blush and frown, and sober reason mock.

Oft at such season, too, will rhymes unsought
Arrange themselves in some romantic lay;
The which, as things unfitting graver thought,
Are burnt or blotted on some wiser day.—
These few survive—and, proudly let me say,
Court not the critic's smile, nor dread his frown;
They well may serve to while an hour away,
Nor does the volume ask for more renown,
Than Ennui's yawning smile, what time she drops it down.

HAROLD THE DAUNTLESS.

CANTO FIRST.

HAROLD THE DAUNTLESS.

CANTO FIRST.

I.

List to the valorous deeds that were done
By Harold the Dauntless, Count Witikind's son!

Count Witikind came of a regal strain,
And roved with his Norsemen the land and the main.
Woe to the realms which he coasted! for there
Was shedding of blood, and rending of hair,
Rape of maiden, and slaughter of priest,
Gathering of ravens and wolves to the feast:
When he hoisted his standard black,
Before him was battle, behind him wrack,

And he burn'd the churches, that heathen Dane,
To light his band to their barks again.

II.

On Erin's shores was his outrage known,
The winds of France had his banners blown;
Little was there to plunder, yet still
His pirates had foray'd on Scottish hill:
But upon merry England's coast
More frequent he sail'd, for he won the most.
So wide and so far his ravage they knew,
If a sail but gleam'd white 'gainst the welkin blue,
Trumpet and bugle to arms did call,
Burghers hasten'd to man the wall,
Peasants fled inland his fury to 'scape,
Beacons were lighted on headland and cape,
Bells were toll'd out, and aye as they rung,
Fearful and faintly the grey brothers sung,
" Bless us, St Mary, from flood and from fire,
From famine and pest, and Count Witikind's ire!"—

III.

He liked the wealth of fair England so well,
That he sought in her bosom as native to dwell.
He enter'd the Humber in fearful hour,
And disembark'd with his Danish power.
Three Earls came against him with all their train,—
Two hath he taken, and one hath he slain:
Count Witikind left the Humber's rich strand,
And he wasted and warr'd in Northumberland.
But the Saxon King was a sire in age,
Weak in battle, in council sage;
Peace of that heathen leader he sought,
Gifts he gave, and quiet he bought;
And the Count took upon him the peaceable stile,
Of a vassal and liegeman of Britain's broad isle.

IV.

Time will rust the sharpest sword,
Time will consume the strongest cord;

That which moulders hemp and steel,
Mortal arm and nerve must feel.
Of the Danish band, whom Count Witikind led,
Many wax'd aged, and many were dead;
Himself found his armour full weighty to bear,
Wrinkled his brows grew, and hoary his hair;
He lean'd on a staff, when his step went abroad,
And patient his palfrey, when steed he bestrode;
As he grew feebler his wildness ceased,
He made himself peace with prelate and priest,
Made his peace, and, stooping his head,
Patiently listed the counsel they said:
Saint Cuthbert's Bishop was holy and grave,
Wise and good was the council he gave.

V.

"Thou hast murder'd, robb'd, and spoil'd,
Time it is thy poor soul were assoil'd;
Priest did'st thou slay, and churches burn,
Time it is now to repentance to turn;

Fiends hast thou worshipp'd, with fiendish rite,
Leave now the darkness, and wend into light:
O! while life and space are given,
Turn thee yet, and think of Heaven!"
That stern old heathen his head he raised,
And on the good prelate he stedfastly gazed;
"Give me broad lands on the Wear and the Tyne,
My faith I will leave, and I'll cleave unto thine."—

VI.

Broad lands he gave him on Tyne and on Wear,
To be held of the church by bridle and spear;
Part of Monkwearmouth, of Tynedale part,
To better his will, and to soften his heart:
Count Witikind was a joyful man,
Less for the faith than the lands that he wan.
The high church of Durham is dress'd for the day,
The clergy are rank'd in their solemn array;
There came the Count, in a bear-skin warm,
Leaning on Hilda his concubine's arm:

He kneel'd before Saint Cuthbert's shrine,
With patience unwonted at rites divine;
He abjured the gods of heathen race,
And he bent his head at the font of grace;
But such was the griesly old proselyte's look,
That the priest who baptized him grew pale and shook;
And the old monks mutter'd beneath their hood,
" Of a stem so stubborn can never spring good !"—

VII.

Up then arose that grim convertite,
Homeward he hied him when ended the rite;
The prelate in honour will with him ride,
And feast in his castle on Tyne's fair side.
Banners and banderols danced in the wind,
Monks rode before them, and spearmen behind;
Onward they pass'd, till fairly did shine
Pennon and cross on the bosom of Tyne;
And full in front did that fortress lour,
In darksome strength with its buttress and tower:

At the castle-gate was young Harold there,
Count Witikind's only offspring and heir.

VIII.

Young Harold was fear'd for his hardihood,
His strength of frame, and his fury of mood;
Rude he was and wild to behold,
Wore neither collar nor bracelet of gold,
Cap of vair nor rich array,
Such as should grace that festal day:
His doublet of bull's hide was all unbraced,
Uncover'd his head, and his sandal unlaced:
His shaggy black locks on his brow hung low,
And his eyes glanced through them a swarthy glow;
A Danish club in his hand he bore,
The spikes were clotted with recent gore;
At his back a she-wolf, and her wolf-cubs twain,
In the dangerous chase that morning slain.
Rude was the greeting his father he made,
None to the Bishop,—while thus he said:

IX.

" What priest-led hypocrite art thou,
With thy humbled look and thy monkish brow,
Like a shaveling who studies to cheat his vow ?
Can'st thou be Witikind the Waster known,
Royal Eric's fearless son,
Haughty Gunhilda's haughtier lord,
Who won his bride by the axe and sword ;
From the shrine of St Peter the chalice who tore,
And melted to bracelets for Freya and Thor ;
With one blow of his gauntlet who burst the skull,
Before Odin's stone, of the Mountain Bull ?
Then ye worshipp'd with rites that to war-gods belong,
With the deed of the brave, and the blow of the strong,
And now, in thine age to dotage sunk,
Wilt thou patter thy crimes to a shaven monk,
Lay down thy mail-shirt for clothing of hair,
Fasting and scourge, like a slave, wilt thou bear ?

Or, at best, be admitted in slothful bower
To batten with priest and with paramour?
O! out upon thine endless shame!
Each Scald's high harp shall blast thy fame,
And thy son will refuse thee a father's name!"—

X.

Ireful wax'd old Witikind's look,
His faultering voice with fury shook;—
"Hear me, Harold of harden'd heart!
Stubborn and wilful ever thou wert.
Thine outrage insane I command thee to cease,
Fear my wrath and remain at peace:—
Just is the debt of repentance I've paid,
Richly the church has a recompence made,
And the truth of her doctrines I prove with my blade.
But reckoning to none of my actions I owe,
And least to my son such accounting will show.
Why speak I to thee of repentance or truth,
Who ne'er from thy childhood knew reason or ruth?

Hence! to the wolf and the bear in her den;
These are thy mates, and not rational men."—

XI.

Grimly smiled Harold, and coldly replied,
"We must honour our sires, if we fear when they chide.
For me, I am yet what thy lessons have made,
I was rock'd in a buckler and fed from a blade;
An infant, was taught to clap hands and to shout,
From the roofs of the tower when the flame had broke out;
In the blood of slain foemen my finger to dip,
And tinge with its purple my cheek and my lip.—
'Tis thou know'st not truth, that hast barter'd in eld,
For a price, the brave faith that thine ancestors held.
When this wolf,"—and the carcase he flung on the plain,—
"Shall awake and give food to her nurselings again,
The face of his father will Harold review;
Till then, aged Heathen, young Christian, adieu!"—

XII.

Priest, monk, and prelate stood aghast,
As through the pageant the heathen pass'd.
A cross-bearer out of his saddle he flung,
Laid his hand on the pommel and into it sprung;
Loud was the shriek, and deep the groan,
When the holy sign on the earth was thrown!
The fierce old Count unsheathed his brand,
But the calmer Prelate stay'd his hand;
"Let him pass free!—Heaven knows its hour,—
But he must own repentance's power,
Pray and weep, and penance bear,
Ere he hold land by the Tyne and the Wear."—
Thus in scorn and in wrath from his father is gone
Young Harold the Dauntless, Count Witikind's son.

XIII.

High was the feasting in Witikind's hall,
Revell'd priests, soldiers, and pagans, and all;

And e'en the good Bishop was fain to endure
The scandal which time and instruction might cure:
It were dangerous, he deem'd, at the first to restrain
In his wine and his wassail, a half-christen'd Dane.
The mead flow'd around and the ale was drain'd dry,
Wild was the laughter, the song, and the cry;
With Kyrie Eleisen came clamorously in
The war-songs of Danesman, Norweyan, and Finn,
Till man after man the contention gave o'er,
Outstretch'd on the rushes that strew'd the hall floor;
And the tempest within, having ceased its wild rout,
Gave place to the tempest that thunder'd without.

XIV.

Apart from the wassail, in turret alone,
Lay flaxen-hair'd Gunnar, old Ermengarde's son;
In the train of Lord Harold the page was the first,
For Harold in childhood had Ermengarde nursed;
And grieved was young Gunnar his master should roam,
Unhoused and unfriended, an exile from home.

He heard the deep thunder, the plashing of rain,
He saw the red lightning through shot-hole and pane;
" And oh !" said the page, " on the shelterless wold
Lord Harold is wandering in darkness and cold !
What though he was stubborn, and wayward, and wild,
He endured me because I was Ermengarde's child,
And often from dawn till the set of the sun,
In the chase, by his stirrup, unchidden I run:
I would I were older and knighthood could bear,
I would soon quit the banks of the Tyne and the Wear;
For my mother's command with her last parting breath,
Bade me follow her nursling in life and to death.

XV.

" It pours and it thunders, it lightens amain,
As if Lok, the Destroyer, had burst from his chain !
Accursed by the church, and expell'd by his sire,
Nor Christian nor Dane give him shelter or fire,
And this tempest what mortal may houseless endure ?
Unaided, unmantled, he dies on the moor !

Whate'er comes of Gunnar he tarries not here."
He leapt from his couch and he grasp'd to his spear,
Sought the hall of the feast. Undisturb'd by his tread,
The wassailers slept fast as the sleep of the dead:
" Ungrateful and bestial !" his anger broke forth,
" To forget 'mid your goblets the pride of the North!
And you, ye cowl'd priests, who have plenty in store,
Must give Gunnar for ransom a palfrey and ore."—

XVI.

Then heeding full little of ban or of curse,
He has seized on the Prior of Jorvaux's purse:
Saint Meneholt's Abbot next morning has miss'd
His mantle, deep furr'd from the cape to the wrist:
The seneschal's keys from his belt he has ta'en,
(Well drench'd on that eve was old Hildebrand's brain).
To the stable-yard he made his way,
And mounted the Bishop's palfrey gay,
Castle and hamlet behind him has cast,
And right on his way to the moorland has pass'd.

Sore snorted the palfrey, unused to face
A weather so wild at so rash a pace;
So long he snorted, so loud he neigh'd,
There answer'd a steed that was bound beside,
And the red flash of lightning shew'd there where lay
His master, Lord Harold, outstretch'd on the clay.

XVII.

Up he started, and thunder'd out, "Stand!"
And raised the club in his deadly hand.
The flaxen-hair'd Gunnar his purpose told,
Shew'd the palfrey and proffer'd the gold.
"Back, back, and home, thou simple boy!
Thou can'st not share my grief or joy:
Have I not mark'd thee wail and cry
When thou hast seen a sparrow die?
And can'st thou, as my follower should,
Wade ancle-deep through foeman's blood,
Dare mortal and immortal foe,
The gods above, the fiends below,

And man on earth, more hateful still,
The very fountain-head of ill?
Desperate of life, and careless of death,
Lover of bloodshed, and slaughter, and scathe,
Such must thou be with me to roam,
And such thou can'st not be—back, and home!"—

XVIII.

Young Gunnar shook like an aspen bough,
As he heard the harsh voice and beheld the dark brow,
And half he repented his purpose and vow.
But now to draw back were bootless shame,
And he loved his master, so urged his claim:
"Alas! if my arm and my courage be weak,
Bear with me a while for old Ermengarde's sake,
Nor deem so lightly of Gunnar's faith,
As to fear he would break it for peril of death.
Have I not risk'd it to fetch thee this gold,
This surcoat and mantle to fence thee from cold?

And, did I bear a baser mind,
What lot remains if I stay behind?
The priests' revenge, thy father's wrath,
A dungeon and a shameful death."—

XIX.

With gentler look Lord Harold eyed
The page, then turn'd his head aside;
And either a tear did his eye-lash stain,
Or it caught a drop of the passing rain.
" Art thou an outcast then?" quoth he,
" The meeter page to follow me."
'Twere bootless to tell what climes they sought,
Ventures achieved, and battles fought;
How oft with few, how oft alone,
Fierce Harold's arm the field hath won.
Men swore his eye, that flash'd so red
When each other glance was quench'd with dread,
Bore oft a light of deadly flame
That ne'er from mortal courage came.

Those limbs so strong, that mood so stern,
That loved the couch of heath and fern,
Afar from hamlet, tower, and town,
More than to rest on driven down;
That stubborn frame, that sullen mood,
Men deem'd must come of aught but good;
And they whisper'd, the great Master Fiend was at one
With Harold the Dauntless, Count Witikind's son.

XX.

Years after years had gone and fled,
The good old Prelate lies lapp'd in lead;
In the chapel still is shewn
His sculptured form on a marble stone,
With staff and ring and scapulaire,
And folded hands in the act of prayer.
Saint Cuthbert's mitre is resting now
On the haughty Saxon, bold Aldingar's brow;
The power of his crozier he loved to extend
O'er whatever would break or whatever would bend:

And now hath he clothed him in cope and in pall,
And the Chapter of Durham has met at his call.
" And hear ye not, brethren," the proud Bishop said,
" That our vassal, the Danish Count Witikind's dead?
All his gold and his goods hath he given
To holy church for the love of heaven,
And hath founded a chantry with stipend and dole,
That priests and that beadsmen may pray for his soul:
Harold his son is wandering abroad,
Dreaded by man and abhorred by God;
Meet it is not, that such should heir
The lands of the church on the Tyne and the Wear,
And at her pleasure, her hallow'd hands
May now resume these wealthy lands."—

XXI.

Answer'd good Eustace, a canon old,
" Harold is tameless, and furious, and bold;
Ever Renown blows a note of fame,
And a note of fear, when she sounds his name:

Much of bloodshed and much of scathe
Have been their lot who have waked his wrath.
Leave him these lands and lordships still,
Heaven in its hour may change his will;
But if reft of gold, and of living bare,
An evil counsellor is despair."—
More had he said, but the Prelate frown'd,
And murmur'd his brethren who sate around,
And with one consent have they given their doom,
That the church should the lands of Saint Cuthbert resume.
So will'd the Prelate; and canon and dean
Gave to his judgment their loud amen.

END OF CANTO FIRST.

HAROLD THE DAUNTLESS.

CANTO SECOND.

HAROLD THE DAUNTLESS.

CANTO SECOND.

'Tis merry in greenwood, thus runs the old lay,
In the gladsome month of lively May,
When the wild birds' song on stem and spray
Invites to forest bower;
Then rears the ash his airy crest,
Then shines the birch in silver vest,
And the beech in glistening leaves is dress'd,
And dark between shews the oak's proud breast,
Like a chieftain's frowning tower;
Though a thousand branches join their screen,
Yet the broken sun-beams glance between,
And tip the leaves with lighter green,
With brighter tints the flower:

Dull is the heart that loves not then
The deep recess of the wild-wood glen,
Where roe and red-deer find sheltering den,
When the sun is in his power.

II.

Less merry, perchance, is the fading leaf
That follows so soon on the gather'd sheaf,
When the green-wood loses the name;
Silent is then the forest bound,
Save the red-breast's note, and the rustling sound
Of frost-nipt leaves that are dropping round,
Or the deep-mouth'd cry of the distant hound
That opens on his game:
Yet then, too, I love the forest wide,
Whether the sun in splendour ride
And gild its many-colour'd side;
Or whether the soft and silvery haze,
In vapoury folds, o'er the landscape strays,
And half involves the woodland maze,
Like an early widow's veil,

Where wimpling tissue from the gaze
The form half hides and half betrays,
Of beauty wan and pale.

III.

Fair Metelill was a woodland maid,
Her father a rover of green-wood shade,
By forest statutes undismay'd,
Who lived by bow and quiver.
Well known was Wulfstane's archery,
By merry Tyne both on moor and lea,
Through wooded Weardale's glens so free,
Well beside Stanhope's wild-wood tree,
And well on Ganlesse river.
Yet free though he trespass'd on woodland game,
More known and more fear'd was the wizard fame
Of Jutta of Rookhope, the Outlaw's dame;
Fear'd when she frown'd was her eye of flame,
More fear'd when in wrath she laugh'd;

For then, 'twas said, more fatal true
To its dread aim her spell-glance flew,
Than when from Wulfstane's bended yew
Sprung forth the grey-goose shaft.

IV.

Yet had this fierce and dreaded pair,
So heaven decreed, a daughter fair;
None brighter crown'd the bed,
In Britain's bounds, of peer or prince,
Nor hath, perchance, a lovelier since
In this fair isle been bred.
And nought of fraud, or ire, or ill,
Was known to gentle Metelill,
A simple maiden she;
The spells in dimpled smiles that lie,
And a downcast blush, and the darts that fly
With the sidelong glance of a hazel eye,
Were her arms and witchery.

So young, so simple was she yet,
She scarce could childhood's joys forget,
And still she loved, in secret set
Beneath the green-wood tree,
To plait the rushy coronet,
And braid with flowers her locks of jet,
As when in infancy;—
Yet could that heart, so simple, prove
The early dawn of stealing love:
Ah! gentle maid, beware!
The power who, now so mild a guest,
Gives dangerous yet delicious zest
To the calm pleasures of thy breast,
Will soon, a tyrant o'er the rest,
Let none his empire share.

V.

One morn in kirtle green array'd,
Deep in the wood the maiden stray'd,
And, where a fountain sprung,

She sate her down, unseen, to thread
The scarlet berry's mimic braid,
And while the beads she strung,
Like the blithe lark, whose carol gay
Gives a good-morrow to the day,
So lightsomely she sung.

VI.

Song.

LORD WILLIAM was born in gilded bower,
The heir of Wilton's lofty tower;
Yet better loves Lord William now
To roam beneath wild Rookhope's brow;
And William has lived where ladies fair
With gawds and jewels deck their hair,
Yet better loves the dew-drops still
That pearl the locks of Metelill.

"The pious Palmer loves, I wis,
Saint Cuthbert's hallow'd beads to kiss;

But I, though simple girl I be,
Might have such homage paid to me;
For did Lord William see me suit
This necklace of the bramble's fruit,
He fain—but must not have his will,—
Would kiss the beads of Metelill.

"My nurse has told me many a tale,
How vows of love are weak and frail;
My mother says that courtly youth
By rustic maid means seldom sooth;
What should they mean? it cannot be,
That such a warning's meant for me,
For nought—oh! nought of fraud or ill
Can William mean to Metelill!"—

VII.

Sudden she stops—and starts to feel
A weighty hand, a glove of steel,
Upon her shrinking shoulders laid;
Fearful she turn'd, and saw, dismay'd,

A Knight in plate and mail array'd,
His crest and bearing worn and fray'd,
His surcoat soil'd and riven,
Form'd like that giant race of yore,
Whose long-continued crimes out-wore
The sufferance of heaven.
Stern accents made his pleasure known,
Though then he used his gentlest tone:
" Maiden," he said, " sing forth thy glee.
Start not—sing on—it pleases me."

VIII.

Secured within his powerful hold,
To bend her knee, her hands to fold,
Was all the maiden might;
And " Oh! forgive," she faintly said,
" The terrors of a simple maid,
If thou art mortal wight!
But if—of such strange tales are told,—
Unearthly warrior of the wold,
Thou com'st to chide mine accents bold,

My mother, Jutta, knows the spell,
At noon and midnight pleasing well
The disembodied ear;
Oh! let her powerful charms atone
For aught my rashness may have done,
And cease thy grasp of fear."
Then laugh'd the Knight—his laughter's sound
Half in the hollow helmet drown'd;
His barred visor then he raised,
And steady on the maiden gazed.
He smooth'd his brows, as best he might,
To the dread calm of autumn night,
When sinks the tempest's roar;
Yet still the cautious fishers eye
The clouds, and fear the gloomy sky,
And haul their barks on shore.

IX.

" Damsel," he said, " be wise, and learn
Matters of weight and deep concern:

From distant realms I come,
And, wanderer long, at length have plann'd,
In this my native Northern land
To seek myself a home.
Nor that alone—a mate I seek;
She must be gentle, soft, and meek,—
No lordly dame for me;
Myself am something rough of mood,
And feel the fire of royal blood,
And therefore do not hold it good
To match in my degree.
Then, since coy maidens say my face
Is harsh, my form devoid of grace,
For a fair lineage to provide,
'Tis meet that my selected bride
In lineaments be fair;
I love thine well—till now I ne'er
Look'd patient on a face of fear,
But now that tremulous sob and tear
Become thy beauty rare.

One kiss—nay, damsel, coy it not:
And now go seek thy parents' cot,
And say, a bridegroom soon I come
To woo my love and bear her home."

X.

Home sprung the maid without a pause,
As levret 'scaped from greyhound's jaws;
But still she lock'd, howe'er distress'd,
The secret in her boding breast;
Dreading her sire, who oft forbade
Her steps should stray to distant glade.
Night came—to her accustom'd nook
Her distaff aged Jutta took,
And by the lamp's imperfect glow,
Rough Wulfstane trimm'd his shafts and bow.
Sudden and clamorous, from the ground
Upstarted slumbering brach and hound;
Loud knocking next the lodge alarms,
And Wulfstane snatches at his arms,

When open flew the yielding door,
And that grim Warrior press'd the floor.

XI.

" All peace be here—What ! none replies ?
Dismiss your fears and your surprise.
'Tis I—that maid hath told my tale,
Or, trembler, did thy courage fail ?
It recks not—it is I demand
Fair Metelill in marriage band ;
Harold the Dauntless I, whose name
Is brave men's boast and caitiffs shame."—
The parents sought each other's eyes,
With awe, resentment, and surprise :
Wulfstane, to quarrel prompt, began
The stranger's size and thewes to scan ;
But as he scann'd, his courage sunk,
And from unequal strife he shrunk.
Then forth, to blight and blemish, flies
The harmful curse from Jutta's eyes ;

Yet fatal howsoe'er, the spell
On Harold innocently fell!
And disappointment and amaze
Were in the witch's wilder'd gaze.

XII.

But soon the wit of woman woke,
And to the Warrior mild she spoke:
"Her child was all too young."—"A toy,
The refuge of a maiden coy."—
Again, "A powerful baron's heir
Claims in her heart an interest fair."
"A trifle—whisper in his ear,
That Harold is a suitor here!"
Baffled at length she sought delay:
"Would not the Knight till morning stay?
Late was the hour—he there might rest
Till morn, their lodge's honour'd guest."
Such were her words,—her craft might cast,
Her honour'd guest should sleep his last:

" No, not to-night—but soon," he swore,
" He would return, nor leave them more."—
The threshold then his huge stride crost,
And soon he was in darkness lost.

XIII.

Appall'd awhile the parents stood,
Then changed their fear to angry mood,
And foremost fell their words of ill
On unresisting Metelill:
Was she not caution'd and forbid,
Forewarn'd, implored, accused, and chid,
And must she still to greenwood roam,
To marshal such misfortune home?
" Hence, minion—to thy chamber hence,
There prudence learn and penitence."
She went—her lonely couch to steep
In tears which absent lovers weep;
Or if she gain'd a troubled sleep,

Fierce Harold's suit was still the theme
And terror of her feverish dream.

XIV.

Scarce was she gone, her dame and sire
Upon each other bent their ire;
"A woodsman thou and hast a spear,
And couldst thou such an insult bear?"
Sullen he said, "A man contends
With men, a witch with sprites and fiends;
Not to mere mortal wight belong
Yon gloomy brow and frame so strong.
But thou—is this thy promise fair,
That your Lord William, wealthy heir
To Ulrick, Baron of Witton-le-wear,
Should Metelill to altar bear?
Do all the spells thou boast'st as thine
Serve but to slay some peasant's kine,
His grain in autumn-storms to steep,
Or thorough fog and fen to sweep,
And hag-ride some poor rustic's sleep?

Is such mean mischief worth the fame
Of sorceress and witch's name?
Fame, which with all men's wish conspires,
With thy deserts and my desires,
To damn thy corpse to penal fires?
Out on thee, witch! aroint! aroint!
What now shall put thy schemes in joint?
What save this trusty arrow's point,
From the dark dingle when it flies,
And he who meets it gasps and dies."—

XV.

Stern she replied, "I will not wage
War with thy folly or thy rage;
But ere the morrow's sun be low,
Wulfstane of Rookhope, thou shalt know,
If I can venge me on a foe.
Believe the while, that whatsoe'er
I spoke, in ire, of bow and spear,
It is not Harold's destiny
The death of pilfer'd deer to die.

But he, and thou, and yon pale moon,
That shall be yet more pallid soon,
Before she sink behind the dell,
Thou, she, and Harold too, shall tell
What Jutta knows of charm or spell."—
Thus muttering, to the door she bent
Her wayward steps, and forth she went,
And left alone the moody sire,
To cherish or to slake his ire.

XVI.

Far faster than belonged to age
Has Jutta made her pilgrimage.
A priest has met her as she pass'd,
And cross'd himself and stood aghast:
She traced a hamlet—not a cur
His throat would ope, his foot would stir;
By crouch, by trembling, and by groan,
They made her hated presence known!
But when she trode the sable fell,

Were wilder sounds her way to tell,—
For far was heard the fox's yell,
The black-cock waked and faintly crew,
Scream'd o'er the moss the scared curlew;
Where o'er the cataract the oak
Lay slant, was heard the raven's croak;
The mountain-cat, which sought his prey,
Glared, scream'd, and started from her way.
Such music cheer'd her journey lone
To the deep dell and rocking stone:
There, with unhallow'd hymn of praise,
She call'd a God of heathen days.

XVII.

Invocation.

From thy Pomeranian throne,
Hewn in rock of living stone,
Where, to thy godhead faithful yet,
Bend Esthonian, Finn, and Lett,
And their swords in vengeance whet,

That shall make thine altars wet,
Wet and red for ages more
With the Christians' hated gore,—
Hear me! Sovereign of the Rock,
Hear me! mighty Zernebock.

Mightiest of the mighty known,
Here thy wonders have been shown;
Hundred tribes in various tongue
Oft have here thy praises sung,
Down that stone with runick seam'd,
Hundred victims' blood hath stream'd!
Now one woman comes alone,
And but wets it with her own,
The last, the feeblest of thy flock,—
Hear—and be present, Zernebock!

Hark! he comes; the night-blast cold
Wilder sweeps along the wold;

The cloudless moon grows dark and dim,
And bristling hair and quaking limb
Proclaim the Master Demon nigh,—
Those who view his form shall die!
Lo! I stoop and veil my head;
Thou who ridest the tempest dread,
Shaking hill and rending oak—
Spare me! spare me! Zernebock.

He comes not yet! Shall cold delay
Thy votaress at her need repay?
Thou—shall I call thee god or fiend?—
Let others on thy mood attend
With prayer and ritual—Jutta's arms
Are necromantic words and charms:
Mine is the spell, that, utter'd once,
Shall wake Thy Master from his trance,
Shake his red mansion-house of pain,
And burst his seven-times twisted chain.

So! com'st thou ere the spell is spoke?
I own thy presence, Zernebock.

XVIII.

" Daughter of dust," the Deep Voice said,
—Shook while it spoke the vale for dread,
Rock'd on the base that massive stone,
The Evil Deity to own,—
" Daughter of dust! not mine the power
Thou seek'st on Harold's fatal hour.
'Twixt heaven and hell there is a strife
Waged for his soul and for his life,
And fain would we the combat win,
And snatch him in his hour of sin.
There is a star now rising red,
That threats him with an influence dread:
Woman, thine arts of malice whet,
To use the space before it set.
Involve him with the church in strife,
Push on adventurous chance his life;

Ourself will in the hour of need,
As best we may, thy counsels speed."
So ceased the Voice; for seven leagues round
Each hamlet started at the sound;
But slept again, as slowly died
Its thunders on the hill's brown side.

XIX.

"And is this all," said Jutta stern,
"That thou canst teach and I can learn?
Hence! to the land of fog and waste,
There fittest is thine influence placed,
Thou powerless sluggish Deity!
But ne'er shall Briton bend the knee
Again before so poor a god."—
She struck the altar with her rod;
Slight was the touch, as when at need
A damsel stirs her tardy steed;
But to the blow the stone gave place,
And, starting from its balanced base,

Roll'd thundering down the moon-light dell,—
Re-echo'd moorland, rock, and fell;
Into the moon-light tarn it dash'd,
Their shores the sounding surges lash'd,
And there was ripple, rage, and foam;
But on that lake, so dark and lone,
Placid and pale the moonbeam shone
As Jutta hied her home.

END OF CANTO SECOND.

HAROLD THE DAUNTLESS.

CANTO THIRD.

HAROLD THE DAUNTLESS.

CANTO THIRD.

I.

Grey towers of Durham! there was once a time
I view'd your battlements with such vague hope,
As brightens life in its first dawning prime;
Not that e'en then came within fancy's scope
A vision vain of mitre, throne, or cope;
Yet, gazing on the venerable hall,
Her flattering dreams would in perspective ope
Some reverend room, some prebendary's stall,—
And thus Hope me deceived as she deceiveth all.

Well yet I love thy mix'd and massive piles,
Half church of God, half castle 'gainst the Scot,
And long to roam these venerable aisles,
With records stored of deeds long since forgot:
There might I share my Surtees' happier lot,
Who leaves at will his patrimonial field
To ransack every crypt and hallow'd spot,
And from oblivion rend the spoils they yield,
Restoring priestly chaunt and clang of knightly shield.

Vain is the wish—since other cares demand
Each vacant hour, and in another clime;
But still that northern harp invites my hand
Which tells the wonder of thine earlier time;
And fain its numbers would I now command
To paint the beauties of that dawning fair,
When Harold, gazing from its lofty stand
Upon the western heights of Beaurepaire,
Saw Saxon Eadmer's towers begirt by winding Wear.

II.

Fair on the half-seen streams the sunbeams danced,
Betraying it beneath the woodland bank,
And fair between the Gothic turrets glanced
Broad lights, and shadows fell on front and flank,
Where tower and buttress rose in martial rank,
And girdled in the massive donjon Keep,
And from their circuit peal'd o'er bush and bank
The matin bell with summons long and deep,
And echo answer'd still with long-resounding sweep.

III.

The morning mists rose from the ground,
Each merry bird awaken'd round
As if in revelry;
Afar the bugles' clanging sound
Call'd to the chase the lagging hound,
The gale breathed soft and free,
And seem'd to linger on its way
To catch fresh odours from the spray,

And waved it in its wanton play
So light and gamesomely.
The scenes which morning beams reveal,
Its sounds to hear, its gales to feel
In all their fragrance round him steal,
It melted Harold's heart of steel,
And, hardly wotting why,
He doff'd his helmet's gloomy pride,
And hung it on a tree beside,
Laid mace and falchion by,
And on the green sward sate him down,
And from his dark habitual frown
Relax'd his rugged brow—
Whoever hath the doubtful task
From that stern Dane a boon to ask
Were wise to ask it now.

IV.

His place beside young Gunnar took,
And mark'd his master's softening look,

And in his eye's dark mirror spied
The gloom of stormy thought subside,
And cautious watch'd the fittest tide
To speak a warning word.
So when the torrent's billows shrink,
The timid pilgrim on the brink
Waits long to see them wave and sink,
Ere he dare brave the ford,
And often, after doubtful pause,
His step advances or withdraws:
Fearful to move the slumbering ire
Of his stern lord, thus stood the squire,
Till Harold raised his eye,
That glanced as when athwart the shroud
Of the dispersing tempest-cloud
The bursting sunbeams fly.

V.

" Arouse thee, son of Ermengarde,
Offspring of prophetess and bard!

Take harp, and greet this lovely prime
With some high strain of Runic rhyme,
Strong, deep, and powerful! Peal it round
Like that loud bell's sonorous sound,
Yet wild by fits, as when the lay
Of bird and bugle hail the day.
Such was my grandsire, Erick's sport,
When dawn gleam'd on his martial court.
Heymar the Scald, with harp's high sound,
Summon'd the chiefs who slept around;
Couch'd on the spoils of wolf and bear,
They roused like lions from their lair,
Then rush'd in emulation forth
To enhance the glories of the north.—
Proud Erick, mightiest of thy race,
Where is thy shadowy resting place?
In wild Valhalla hast thou quaff'd
From foeman's skull metheglin draught,
Or wander'st where thy cairn was piled
To frown o'er oceans wide and wild?

Or have the milder Christians given
Thy refuge in their peaceful heaven?
Where'er thou art, to thee are known
Our toils endured, our trophies won,
Our wars, our wanderings, and our woes."—
He ceased, and Gunnar's song arose.

VI.

Song.

" HAWK and osprey scream'd for joy
O'er the beetling cliffs of Hoy,
Crimson foam the beach o'erspread,
The heath was dyed with darker red,
When o'er Erick, Inguar's son,
Dane and Northman piled the stone;
Singing wild the war-song stern,
Rest thee, Dweller of the Cairn!

" Where eddying currents foam and boil
By Bersa's burgh and Græmsay's isle,

The seaman sees a martial form
Half-mingled with the mist and storm.
In anxious awe he bears away
To moor his bark in Stromna's bay,
And murmurs from the bounding stern,
"Rest thee, Dweller of the Cairn!"

"What cares disturb the mighty dead?
Each honoured rite was duly paid;
No daring hand thy helm unlaced,
Thy sword, thy shield, were near thee placed,
Thy flinty couch no tear profaned,
Without, with hostile blood 'twas stained;
Within, 'twas lined with moss and fern,—
Then rest thee, Dweller of the Cairn!

"He may not rest: from realms afar
Comes voice of battle and of war,
Of conquest wrought with bloody hand
On Carmel's cliffs and Jordan's strand,

When Odin's warlike son could daunt
The turban'd race of Termagaunt"——

VII.

" Peace," said the Knight, " the noble Scald
Our warlike fathers' deeds recall'd,
But never strove to sooth the son
With tales of what himself had done.
At Odin's board the bard sits high
Whose harp ne'er stoop'd to flattery;
But highest he whose daring lay
Hath dared unwelcome truths to say."—
With doubtful smile young Gunnar eyed
His master's looks, and nought replied—
But well that smile his master led
To construe what he left unsaid.
" Is it to me, thou timid youth,
Thou fear'st to speak unwelcome truth?
My soul no more thy censure grieves
Than frosts rob laurels of their leaves.

Say on—and yet—beware the rude
And wild distemper of my blood;
Loth were I that mine ire should wrong
The youth that bore my shield so long,
And who, in service constant still,
Though weak in frame, art strong in will."—
" Oh !" quoth the page, " even there depends
My counsel—there my warning tends—
Oft seems as of my master's breast
Some demon were the sudden guest;
Then at the first misconstrued word
His hand is on the mace and sword,
From her firm seat his wisdom driven,
His life to countless dangers given.—
O ! would that Gunnar could suffice
To be the fiend's last sacrifice,
So that, when glutted with my gore,
He fled and tempted thee no more !"

VIII.

Then waved his hand, and shook his head,
The impatient Dane, while thus he said:
" Profane not, youth—it is not thine
To judge the spirit of our line—
The bold Berserkar's rage divine,
Through whose inspiring, deeds are wrought
Past human strength and human thought.
When full upon his gloomy soul
The champion feels the influence roll,
He swims the lake, he leaps the wall—
Heeds not the depth, nor plumbs the fall—
Unshielded, mail-less, on he goes
Singly against a host of foes;
Their spears he holds like wither'd reeds,
Their mail like maiden's silken weeds;
One 'gainst a hundred will he strive,
Take countless wounds, and yet survive.

Then rush the eagles to his cry
Of slaughter and of victory,—
And blood he quaffs like Odin's bowl,
Deep drinks his sword,—deep drinks his soul;
And all that meet him in his ire
He gives to ruin, rout, and fire,
Then, like gorged lion, seeks some den,
And couches till he's man agen.—
Thou know'st the signs of look and limb,
When 'gins that rage to over-brim—
Thou know'st when I am moved, and why;
And when thou seest me roll mine eye,
Set my teeth thus, and stamp my foot,
Regard thy safety and be mute;
But else, speak boldly out whate'er
Is fitting that a knight should hear.
I love thee, youth. Thy lay has power
Upon my dark and sullen hour;—
So Christian monks are wont to say
Demons of old were charm'd away;—

Then fear not I will rashly deem
Ill of thy speech, whate'er the theme."

IX.

As down some strait in doubt and dread
The watchful pilot drops the lead,
And, cautious in the midst to steer,
The shoaling channel sounds with fear;
So, lest on dangerous ground he swerved,
The page his master's brow observed,
Pausing at intervals to fling
His hand on the melodious string,
And to his moody breast apply
The soothing charm of harmony,
While hinted half, and half exprest,
This warning song convey'd the rest.

1.

" Ill fares the bark with tackle riven,
And ill when on the breakers driven,—

Ill when the storm-sprite shrieks in air,
And the scared mermaid tears her hair;
But worse when on her helm the hand
Of some false traitor holds command.

2.

" Ill fares the fainting Palmer, placed
'Mid Hebron's rocks or Rama's waste,—
Ill when the scorching sun is high,
And the expected font is dry,—
Worse when his guide o'er sand and heath,
The barbarous Copt, has plann'd his death.

3.

" Ill fares the knight with buckler cleft,
And ill when of his helm bereft,—
Ill when his steed to earth is flung,
Or from his grasp his falchion wrung;
But worse, of instant ruin token,
When he lists rede by woman spoken."

X.

" How now, fond boy ?—Canst thou think ill,"
Said Harold, " of fair Metelill ?"—
" She may be fair," the page replied,
As through the strings he ranged,—
" She may be fair ; but yet,"—he cried,
And then the strain he changed,——

1.

" She may be fair," he sang, " but yet
Far fairer have I seen
Than she, for all her locks of jet,
And eyes so dark and sheen.
Were I a Danish knight in arms,
As one day I may be,
My heart should own no foreign charms,—
A Danish maid for me.

2.

" I love my father's northern land,
Where the dark pine-trees grow,
And the bold Baltic's echoing strand
Looks o'er each grassy oe.*
I love to mark the lingering sun,
From Denmark loth to go,
And leaving on the billows bright,
To cheer the short-lived summer night,
A path of ruddy glow.

3.

" But most the northern maid I love,
With breast like Denmark's snow,
And form as fair as Denmark's pine,
Who loves with purple heath to twine
Her locks of sunny glow;

* *Oe.* Island.

And sweetly blends that shade of gold
With the cheek's rosy hue,
And Faith might for her mirror hold
That eye of matchless blue.

4.

" 'Tis her's the manly sports to love
That southern maidens fear,
To bend the bow by stream and grove,
And lift the hunter's spear.
She can her chosen champion's fight
With eye undazzled see,
Clasp him victorious from the strife,
Or on his corpse yield up her life,—
A Danish maid for me!"

X.

Then smiled the Dane—" Thou canst so well
The virtues of our maidens tell,

Half could I wish my choice had been
Blue eyes, and hair of golden sheen,
And lofty soul;—yet what of ill
Hast thou to charge on Metelill?"—
"On her nought," young Gunnar said,
"But her base sire's ignoble trade.
Her mother, too—the general fame
Hath given to Jutta evil name,
And in her grey eye is a flame
Art cannot hide, nor fear can tame.—
That sordid woodman's peasant cot
Twice have thine honour'd footsteps sought,
And twice return'd with such ill rede
As sent thee on some desperate deed."—

XI.

"Thou errest; Jutta wisely said,
He that comes suitor to a maid,
Ere link'd in marriage, should provide
Lands and a dwelling for his bride—

My father's by the Tyne and Wear
I have reclaim'd."—" O, all too dear,
And all too dangerous the prize,
E'en were it won,"—young Gunnar cries.
" And then this Jutta's fresh device,
That thou should'st seek, a heathen Dane,
From Durham's priests a boon to gain,
When thou hast left their vassals slain
In their own halls !"—Flash'd Harold's eye,
Thunder'd his voice—" False page, you lie !
The castle, hall and tower, is mine,
Built by old Witikind on Tyne.
The wild-cat will defend his den,
Fights for her nest the timid wren ;
And think'st thou I'll forego my right
For dread of monk or monkish knight ?—
Up and away, that deepening bell
Doth of the Bishop's conclave tell.
Thither will I, in manner due,
As Jutta bade, my claim to sue ;

And, if to right me they are loth,
Then woe to church and chapter both !"
Now shift the scene and let the curtain fall,
And our next entry be Saint Cuthbert's hall.

END OF CANTO THIRD

HAROLD THE DAUNTLESS.

CANTO FOURTH.

HAROLD THE DAUNTLESS.

CANTO FOURTH.

FULL many a bard hath sung the solemn gloom
Of the long Gothic aisle and stone-ribb'd roof,
O'er-canopying shrine, and gorgeous tomb,
Carved screen, and altar glimmering far aloof,
And blending with the shade—a matchless proof
Of high devotion, which hath now wax'd cold;
Yet legends say, that Luxury's brute hoof
Intruded oft within such sacred fold,
Like step of Bel's false priest, track'd in his fane of old.

Well pleased am I, howe'er, that when the route
Of our rude neighbours whilome deign'd to come,

Uncall'd, and eke unwelcome, to sweep out
And cleanse our chancel from the rags of Rome,
They spoke not on our ancient fane the doom
To which their bigot zeal gave o'er their own,
But spared the martyr'd saint and storied tomb,
Though papal miracles had graced the stone,
And though the aisles still loved the organ's swelling tone.

And deem not, though 'tis now my part to paint
A prelate sway'd by love of power and gold,
That all who wore the mitre of our Saint
Like to ambitious Aldingar I hold;
Since both in modern times and days of old
It sate on those whose virtues might atone
Their predecessors' frailties trebly told:
Matthew and Morton we as such may own—
And such (if fame speak truth) the honoured Barrington.

II.

But now to earlier and to ruder times,
As subject meet, I tune my rugged rhymes,
Telling how fairly the chapter was met,
And rood and books in seemly order set;
Huge brass-clasped volumes, which the hand
Of studious priest but rarely scann'd,
Now on fair carved desk display'd,
'Twas their's the solemn scene to aid.
O'er-head with many a scutcheon graced,
And quaint devices interlaced,
A labyrinth of crossing rows,
The roof in lessening arches shows;
Beneath its shade placed proud and high,
With footstool and with canopy,
Sate Aldingar, and prelate ne'er
More haughty graced Saint Cuthbert's chair.
Canons and deacons were placed below,
In due degree and lengthen'd row.

Unmoved and silent each sate there,
Like image in his oaken chair;
Nor head, nor hand, nor foot, they stirr'd,
Nor lock of hair, nor tress of beard,
And of their eyes severe alone
The twinkle shew'd they were not stone.

III.

The Prelate was to speech address'd,
Each head sunk reverent on each breast;
But ere his voice was heard—without
Arose a wild tumultuous shout,
Offspring of wonder mix'd with fear,
Such as in crowded streets we hear
Hailing the flames, that, bursting out,
Attract yet scare the rabble rout.
Ere it had ceased, a giant hand
Shook oaken door and iron band,
Till oak and iron both gave way,
Clash'd the long bolts, the hinges bray,

And ere upon angel or saint they can call,
Stands Harold the Dauntless in midst of the hall.

IV.

" Now save ye, my masters, both rocket and rood,
From Bishop with mitre to Deacon with hood !
For here stands Count Harold, old Witikind's son,
Come to sue for the lands which his ancestors won."
The Prelate look'd round him with sore troubled eye,
Unwilling to grant, yet afraid to deny,
While each Canon and Deacon who heard the Dane speak,
To be safely at home would have fasted a week :—
Then Aldingar roused him and answer'd again,
" Thou suest for a boon which thou canst not obtain ;
The church hath no fiefs for an unchristen'd Dane.
Thy father was wise, and his treasure hath given
That the priests of a chantry might hymn him to heaven ;

And the fiefs which whilome he possess'd as his due,
Have lapsed to the church, and been granted anew
To Anthony Conyers and Alberic Vere,
For the service St Cuthbert's bless'd banner to bear,
When the bands of the North come to foray the Wear.
Then disturb not our conclave with wrangling or blame,
But in peace and in patience pass hence as ye came."

V.

Loud laugh'd the stern Pagan—" They're free from the care
Of fief and of service, both Conyers and Vere,—
Six feet of your chancel is all they will need,
A buckler of stone and a corslet of lead.—
Ho, Gunnar!—the tokens!"—and, sever'd anew,
A head and a hand on the altar he threw.
Then shudder'd with terror both Canon and Monk,
They knew the glazed eye and the countenance shrunk,

And of Anthony Conyers the half-grizzled hair,
And the scar on the hand of Sir Alberic Vere.
There was not a churchman or priest that was there,
But grew pale at the sight, and betook him to prayer.

VI.

Count Harold laugh'd at their looks of fear:
" Was this the hand should your banner bear?
Was that the head should wear the casque
In battle at the church's task?
Was it to such you gave the place
Of Harold with the heavy mace?
Find me between the Wear and Tyne
A knight will wield this club of mine,—
Give him my fiefs, and I will say
There's wit beneath the coul of gray."
He raised it, rough with many a stain,
Caught from crush'd scull and spouting brain;
He wheel'd it that it shrilly sung,
And the aisles echoed as it swung,

Then dash'd it down with sheer descent,
And split King Osric's monument.—
" How like ye this music? How trow ye the hand
That can wield such a mace may be reft of its land?
No answer?—I spare ye a space to agree,
And Saint Cuthbert inspire you, a saint if he be.
Ten strides through your chancel, ten strokes on your bell,
And again I am with you,—grave fathers, farewell."

VII.

He turn'd from their presence, he clash'd the oak door,
And the clang of his stride died away on the floor;
And his head from his bosom the Prelate uprears
With a ghost-seer's look when the ghost disappears.
" Ye priests of Saint Cuthbert, now give me your rede,
For never of counsel had Bishop more need!
Were the arch-fiend incarnate in flesh and in bone,
The language, the look, and the laugh were his own.

In the bounds of Saint Cuthbert there is not a knight
Dare confront in our quarrel yon goblin in fight;
Then rede me aright to his claim to reply,
'Tis unlawful to grant, and 'tis death to deny."

VIII.

On ven'son and malmsie that morning had fed
The Cellarer Vinsauf, 'twas thus that he said;
" Delay till to-morrow the Chapter's reply;
Let the feast be spread fair, and the wine be pour'd high:
If he's mortal he drinks,—if he drinks, he is ours—
His bracelets of iron,—his bed in our towers."—
This man had a laughing eye,
Trust not, friends, when such you spy;
A beaker's depth he well could drain,
Revel, sport, and jest amain—
The haunch of the deer and the grape's bright dye
Never bard loved them better than I;

But sooner than Vinsauf fill'd me my wine,
Pass'd me his jest, and laughed at mine,
Though the buck were of Bearpark, of Bourdeaux the vine,
With the dullest hermit I'd rather dine
On an oaten cake and a draught of the Tyne.

IX.

Walwayn the Leech spoke next—he knew
Each plant that loves the sun and dew,
But special those whose juice can gain
Dominion o'er the blood and brain;
The peasant who saw him by pale moonbeam
Gathering such herbs by bank and stream,
Deem'd his thin form and soundless tread
Were those of wanderer from the dead.—
"Vinsauf, thy wine," he said, "hath power,
Our gyves are heavy, strong our tower;
Yet three drops from this flask of mine,
More strong than dungeons, gyves, or wine,

Shall give him prison under ground
More dark, more narrow, more profound.
Short rede, good rede, let Harold have—
A dog's death and a heathen's grave."—
I have lain on a sick man's bed,
Watching for hours for the leech's tread,
As if I deem'd that his presence alone
Were of power to bid my pain begone;
I have listed his words of comfort given,
As if to oracles from heaven;
I have counted his steps from my chamber door,
And bless'd them when they were heard no more;—
But sooner than Walwayn my sick couch should nigh,
My choice were by leech-craft unaided to die.

X.

"Such service done in fervent zeal
The Church may pardon and conceal,"
The doubtful Prelate said, "but ne'er
The counsel ere the act should hear.—

Anselm of Jarrow, advise us now,
The stamp of wisdom is on thy brow;
Thy days, thy nights in cloister pent
Are still to mystic learning lent;—
Anselm of Jarrow, in thee is my hope,
Thou well canst give counsel to Prelate or Pope."

XI.

Answer'd the Prior—" 'Tis wisdom's use
Still to delay what we dare not refuse;
Ere granting the boon he comes hither to ask,
Shape for the giant gigantic task;
Let us see how a step so sounding can tread
In paths of darkness, danger, and dread;
He may not, he will not, impugn our decree,
That calls but for proof of his chivalry,
And were Guy to return, or Sir Bevis the Strong,
Our wilds have adventure might cumber them long—
The castle of Seven Shields"——" Kind Anselm, no more!
The step of the Pagan approaches the door."

The churchmen were hush'd—In his mantle of skin,
With his mace on his shoulder, Count Harold strode in.
There was foam on his lip, there was fire in his eye,
For, chafed by attendance, his fury was nigh.
"Ho! Bishop," he said, "dost thou grant me my claim?
Or must I assert it by falchion and flame?"

XII.

"On thy suit, gallant Harold," the Bishop replied
In accents which trembled, "we might not decide,
Until proof of your strength and your valour we saw—
'Tis not that we doubt them, but such is the law."—
"And would you, Sir Prelate, have Harold make sport
For the cowls and the shavelings that herd in thy court?
Say what shall he do?—From the shrine shall he tear
The lead bier of thy patron and heave it in air,
And through the long chancel make Cuthbert take wing
With the speed of a bullet dismiss'd from the sling?"
"Nay, spare such probation," the Cellarer said,
"From the mouth of our minstrels thy task shall be read.

While the wine sparkles high in the goblet of gold,
And the revel is loudest, thy task shall be told;
And thyself, gallant Harold, shall, hearing it, tell
That the Bishop, his cowls, and his shavelings, meant
well."

XIII.

Loud revell'd the guests, and the goblets loud rang,
But louder the minstrel, Hugh Meneville, sang;
And Harold, the hurry and pride of whose soul,
E'en when verging to fury, own'd music's controul,
Still bent on the harper his broad sable eye,
And often untasted the goblet pass'd by;
Than wine, or than wassail, to him was more dear
The minstrel's high tale of enchantment to hear;
And the Bishop that day might of Vinsauf complain
That his art had but wasted his wine-casks in vain.

XIV.

The Castle of the Seven Shields,

A BALLAD.

THE Druid Urien had daughters seven,
Their skill could call the moon from heaven;
So fair their forms and so high their fame,
That seven proud kings for their suitors came.

King Mador and Rhys came from Powis and Wales,
Unshorn was their hair, and unpruned were their nails;
From Strath Clwyde came Ewain, and Ewain was lame,
And the red-bearded Donald from Galloway came.

Lot, King of Lodon, was hunch-back'd from youth;
Dunmail of Cumbria had never a tooth;
But Adolf of Bambrough, Northumberland's heir,
Was gay and was gallant, was young and was fair.

There was strife 'mongst the sisters, for each one would have
For husband King Adolf, the gallant and brave,
And envy bred hate, and hate urged them to blows,
When the firm earth was cleft, and the Arch-fiend arose!

He swore to the maidens their wish to fulfil—
They swore to the foe they would work by his will.
A spindle and distaff to each hath he given,
"Now hearken my spell," said the Outcast of heaven:

"Ye shall ply these spindles at midnight hour,
And for every spindle shall rise a tower,
Where the right shall be feeble, the wrong shall have power,
And there shall ye dwell with your paramour."

Beneath the pale moonlight they sate on the wold,
And the rhimes which they chaunted must never be told;

And as the black wool from the distaff they sped,
With blood from their bosom they moisten'd the thread.

As light danced the spindles beneath the cold gleam,
The castle arose like the birth of a dream—
The seven towers ascended like mist from the ground,
Seven portals defend them, seven ditches surround.

Within that dread castle seven monarchs were wed,
But six of the seven ere the morning lay dead;
With their eyes all on fire, and their daggers all red,
Seven damsels surround the Northumbrian's bed.

"Six kingly bridegrooms to death we have done,
Six gallant kingdoms King Adolf hath won,
Six lovely brides all his pleasure to do,
Or the bed of the seventh shall be husbandless too."

Well chanced it that Adolf the night when he wed
Had confess'd and had sain'd him ere boune to his bed;

He sprung from the couch and his broad sword he drew,
And there the seven daughters of Urien he slew.

The gate of the castle he bolted and seal'd,
And hung o'er each arch-stone a crown and a shield;
To the cells of St Dunstan then wended his way,
And died in his cloister an anchorite grey.

Seven monarchs' wealth in that castle lies stow'd,
The foul fiends brood o'er them like raven and toad.
Whoever shall guesten these chambers within,
From curfew till matins, that treasure shall win.

But manhood grows faint as the world waxes old!
There lives not in Britain a champion so bold,
So dauntless of heart, and so prudent of brain,
As to dare the adventure that treasure to gain.

The waste ridge of Cheviot shall wave with the rye,
Before the rude Scots shall Northumberland fly,

And the flint clifts of Bambro' shall melt in the sun,
Before that adventure be peril'd and won.

XV.

"And is this my probation?" wild Harold he said,
"Within a lone castle to press a lone bed?—
Good even, my Lord Bishop,—Saint Cuthbert to borrow,
The Castle of Seven Shields receives me to-morrow."

END OF CANTO FOURTH.

HAROLD THE DAUNTLESS.

CANTO FIFTH.

HAROLD THE DAUNTLESS.

CANTO FIFTH.

I.

DENMARK's sage courtier to her princely youth,
Granting his cloud an ouzel or a whale,
Spoke, though unwittingly, a partial truth;
For Phantasy embroiders Nature's veil.
The tints of ruddy eve, or dawning pale,
Of the swart thunder-cloud, or silver haze,
Are but the ground-work of the rich detail
Which Phantasy with pencil wild pourtrays,
Blending what seems and is, in the rapt muser's gaze.

Nor are the stubborn forms of earth and stone
Less to the Sorceress's empire given:
For not with unsubstantial hues alone,
Caught from the varying surge, or vacant heaven,
From bursting sunbeam, or from flashing levin,
She limns her pictures—on the earth, as air,
Arise her castles, and her car is driven;
And never gazed the eye on scene so fair,
But of its boasted charms fancy gave half the share.

II.

Up a wild pass went Harold, bent to prove,
Hugh Meneville, the adventure of thy lay;
Gunnar pursued his steps in faith and love,
Ever companion of his master's way.
Midward their path, a rock of granite grey
From the adjoining cliff had made descent,—
A barren mass—yet with her drooping spray
Had a young birch-tree crown'd its battlement,
Twisting her fibrous roots through cranny, flaw, and rent.

This rock and tree could Gunnar's thought engage
Till Fancy brought the tear-drop to his eye,
And at his master ask'd the timid page,
" What is the emblem that a bard should spy
In that rude rock and its green canopy ?"
And Harold said, " Like to the helmet brave
Of warrior slain in fight it seems to lie,
And these same drooping boughs do o'er it wave
Not all unlike the plume his lady's favour gave."

" Ah, no !" replied the page ; " the ill-starr'd love
Of some poor maid is in the emblem shewn,
Whose fates are with some hero's interwove,
And rooted on a heart to love unknown :
And as the gentle dews of heaven alone
Nourish those drooping boughs, and as the scathe
Of the red lightning rends both tree and stone,
So fares it with her unrequited faith,—
Her sole relief is tears—her only refuge death."

III.

" Thou art a fond fantastic boy,"
Harold replied, " to females coy,
Yet prating still of love;
Even so amid the clash of war
I know thou lovest to keep afar,
Though destined by thy evil star
With one like me to rove,
Whose business and whose joys are found
Upon the bloody battle-ground.
Yet, foolish trembler as thou art,
Thou hast a nook of my rude heart,
And thou and I will never part;—
Harold would wrap the world in flame
Ere injury on Gunnar came."

IV.

The grateful page made no reply,
But turn'd to heaven his gentle eye,

And clasp'd his hands, as one who said,
" My toils—my wanderings are o'erpaid !"
Then in a gayer, lighter strain,
Compell'd himself to speech again ;
And, as they flow'd along,
His words took cadence soft and slow,
And liquid, like dissolving snow,
They melted into song.

V.

" What though through fields of carnage wide
I may not follow Harold's stride,
Yet who with faithful Gunnar's pride
Lord Harold's feats can see ?
And dearer than the couch of pride
He loves the bed of grey wolf's hide,
When slumbering by Lord Harold's side
In forest, field, or lea."

VI.

" Break off!" said Harold, in a tone
Where hurry and surprise were shown,
With some slight touch of fear,—
" Break off, we are not here alone;
A Palmer form comes slowly on!
By cowl, and staff, and mantle known,
My monitor is near.
Now mark him, Gunnar, heedfully;
He pauses by the blighted tree—.
Dost see him, youth?—Thou could'st not see
When in the vale of Galilee
I first beheld his form,
Nor when we met that other while
In Cephalonia's rocky isle,
Before the fearful storm,—
Dost see him now?"—The page, distraught
With terror, answer'd, " I see nought,
And there is nought to see,

Save that the oak's scathed boughs fling down
Upon the path a shadow brown,
That, like a pilgrim's dusky gown,
Waves with the waving tree."

VII.

Count Harold gazed upon the oak
As if his eye-strings would have broke,
And then resolvedly said,—
" Be what it will, yon phantom grey,
Nor heaven, nor hell, shall ever say
That for their shadows from his way
Count Harold turn'd dismay'd:
I'll speak him, though his accents fill
My heart with that unwonted thrill
Which vulgar minds call fear.
I will subdue it!"—Forth he strode,
Paused where the blighted oak-tree show'd
Its sable shadow on the road,
And, folding on his bosom broad
His arms, said, " Speak—I hear."

VIII.

The Deep Voice said, " O wild of will,
Furious thy purpose to fulfil—
Heart-sear'd and unrepentant still,
How long, O Harold, shall thy tread
Disturb the slumbers of the dead ?
Each step in thy wild way thou makest
The ashes of the dead thou wakest ;
And shout in triumph o'er thy path
The fiends of bloodshed and of wrath.
In this thine hour, yet turn and hear !
For life is brief and judgment near."

IX.

Then ceased The Voice.—The Dane replied
In tones where awe and inborn pride
For mastery strove,—" In vain ye chide
The wolf for ravaging the flock,
Or with its hardness taunt the rock,—

I am as they—my Danish strain
Sends streams of fire through ev'ry vein.
Amid thy realms of goule and ghost,
Say, is the fame of Erick lost?
Or Witikind's the Waster, known
Where fame or spoil was to be won;
Whose galleys ne'er bore off a shore
They left not black with flame?—
He was my sire,—and, sprung of him,
That rover merciless and grim,
Can I be soft and tame?
Part hence, and with my crimes no more upbraid me,
I am that Waster's son, and am but what he made me."

X.

The Phantom groan'd;—the mountain shook around,
The faun and wild-doe started at the sound,
The gorse and fern did wildly round them wave,
As if some sudden storm the impulse gave.
" All thou hast said is truth—Yet on the head
Of that bad sire let not the charge be laid,

That he, like thee, with unrelenting pace,
From grave to cradle ran the evil race:—
Relentless in his avarice and ire,
Churches and towns he gave to sword and fire;
Shed blood like water, wasted every land,
Like the destroying angel's burning brand;
Fulfill'd whate'er of ill might be invented,
Yes—all these things he did—he did, but he REPENTED!
Perchance it is part of his punishment still,
That his offspring pursues his example of ill.
But thou, when thy tempest of wrath shall next shake thee,
Gird thy loins for resistance, my son, and awake thee;
If thou yield'st to thy fury, how tempted soever,
The gate of repentance shall ope for thee NEVER!"

XI.

"He is gone," said Lord Harold, and gazed as he spoke;
"There is nought on the path but the shade of the oak,—
He is gone, whose strange presence my feeling oppress'd,
Like the night-hag that sits on the slumberer's breast.

My heart beats as thick as a fugitive's tread,
And cold dews drop from my brow and my head.—
Ho! Gunnar, the flasket yon almoner gave;
He said that three drops would recall from the grave.
For the first time Count Harold owns leech-craft has
power,
Or, his courage to aid, lacks the juice of a flower!"—
The page gave the flasket, which Walwayn had fill'd
With the juice of wild roots that his art had distill'd—
So baneful their influence on all that had breath,
One drop had been frenzy, and two had been death.
Harold took it, but drank not; for jubilee shrill,
And music and clamour, were heard on the hill,
And down the steep pathway, o'er stock and o'er stone,
The train of a bridal came blithesomely on;
There was song, there was pipe, there was timbrel,
and still
The burden was, "Joy to the fair Metelill!"

XI.

Harold might see from his high stance,
Himself unseen, that train advance
With mirth and melody;—
On horse and foot a mingled throng,
Measuring their steps to bridal song
And bridal minstrelsy;
And ever when the blithesome rout
Lent to the song their choral shout,
Redoubling echoes roll'd about,
While echoing cave and cliff sent out
The answering symphony,
Of all those mimic notes which dwell
In hollow rock and sounding dell.

XII.

Joy shook his torch above the band,
By many a various passion fann'd;—

As elemental sparks can feed
On essence pure and coarsest weed,
Gentle, or stormy, or refined,
Joy takes the colours of the mind.
Lightsome and pure, but unrepress'd,
He fired the bridegroom's gallant breast;
More feebly strove with maiden fear,
Yet still joy glimmer'd through the tear
On the bride's blushing cheek, that shows
Like dew-drop on the budding rose;
While Wulfstane's gloomy smile declared
The joy that selfish avarice shared,
And pleased revenge and malice high
Its semblance took in Jutta's eye.
On dangerous adventure sped,
The witch deem'd Harold with the dead,
For thus that morn her Demon said:—
"If, ere the set of sun, be tied
The knot 'twixt bridegroom and his bride,

The Dane shall have no power of ill
O'er William and o'er Metelill."
And the pleased witch made answer, " Then
Must Harold have pass'd from the paths of men !
Evil repose may his spirit have,—
May hemlock and mandrake find root in his grave,—
May his death-sleep be dogg'd by dreams of dismay,
And his waking be worse at the answering day !"—

XIII.

Such was their various mood of glee
Blent in one shout of ecstacy.
But still when joy is brimming highest,
Of sorrow and misfortune nighest,
Of Terror with her ague cheek,
And lurking Danger, sages speak :—
These haunt each path, but chief they lay
Their snares beside the primrose way.—
Thus found that bridal band their path
Beset by Harold in his wrath.

Trembling beneath his maddening mood,
High on a rock the giant stood;
His shout was like the doom of death
Spoke o'er their heads that pass'd beneath.
His destined victims might not spy
The reddening terrors of his eye,—
The frown of rage that writhed his face,—
The lip that foam'd like boar's in chase;—
But all could see—and, seeing, all
Bore back to shun the threaten'd fall,—
The fragment which their giant foe
Rent from the cliff and heaved to throw.

XIV.

Backward they bore;—yet are there two
For battle who prepare:
No pause of dread Lord William knew
Ere his good blade was bare;
And Wulfstane bent his fatal yew,
But ere the silken cord he drew,

As hurl'd from Hecla's thunder, flew
That ruin through the air !—
Full on the outlaw's front it came,
And all that late had human name,
And human face, and human frame,
That lived, and moved, and had free will
To chuse the path of good or ill,
Is to its reckoning gone;
And nought of Wulfstane rests behind,
Save that beneath that stone,
Half-buried in the dinted clay,
A red and shapeless mass there lay,
Of mingled flesh and bone !

XV.

As from the bosom of the sky
The eagle darts amain,
Three bounds from yonder summit high
Placed Harold on the plain.

As the scared wild-fowl scream and fly,
So fled the bridal train;
As 'gainst the eagle's peerless might
The noble falcon dares the fight,
But dares the fight in vain,
So fought the bridegroom; from his hand
The Dane's rude mace has struck his brand,
Its glittering fragments strew the sand,
Its lord lies on the plain.
Now, Heaven! take noble William's part,
And melt that yet unmelted heart,
Or, ere his bridal hour depart,
The hapless bridegroom's slain!

XVI.

Count Harold's frenzied rage is high,
There is a death-fire in his eye,
Deep furrows on his brow are trench'd,
His teeth are set, his hand is clench'd,

The foam upon his lip is white,
His deadly arm is up to smite!
But, as the mace aloft he swung,
To stop the blow young Gunnar sprung,
Around his master's knees he clung,
And cried, "In mercy spare!
O, think upon the words of fear
Spoke by that visionary Seer,
The crisis he foretold is here,—
Grant mercy,—or despair!"
This word suspended Harold's mood,
Yet still with arm upraised he stood,
And visage like the headsman's rude
That pauses for the sign.
"O mark thee with the blessed rood,"
The page implored; "Speak word of good,
Resist the fiend, or be subdued!"—
He sign'd the cross divine—
Instant his eye hath human light,
Less red, less keen, less fiercely bright;

His brow relax'd the obdurate frown,
The fatal mace sinks gently down,
He turns and strides away;
Yet oft, like revellers who leave
Unfinish'd feast, looks back to grieve,
As if repenting the reprieve
He granted to his prey.
Yet still of forbearance one sign hath he given,
And fierce Witikind's son made one step towards heaven.

XVII.

But though his dreaded footsteps part,
Death is behind and shakes his dart;
Lord William on the plain is lying,
Beside him Metelill seems dying!—
Bring odours—essences in haste—
And lo! a flasket richly chased,—
But Jutta the elixir proves
Ere pouring it for those she loves—

Then Walwayn's potion was not wasted,
For when three drops the hag had tasted,
So dismal was her yell,
Each bird of evil omen woke,
The raven gave his fatal croak,
And shriek'd the night-crow from the oak,
The screech-owl from the thicket broke,
And flutter'd down the dell!
So fearful was the sound and stern,
The slumbers of the full-gorged erne
Were startled, and from furze and fern
Of forest and of fell,
The fox and famish'd wolf replied,
(For wolves then prowl'd the Cheviot side,)
From mountain head to mountain head
The unhallow'd sounds around were sped;
But when their latest echo fled,
The sorceress on the ground lay dead.

XVIII.

Such was the scene of blood and woes,
With which the bridal morn arose
Of William and of Metelill;
But oft, when dawning 'gins to spread,
The summer-morn peeps dim and red
Above the eastern hill,
Ere, bright and fair, upon his road
The King of splendour walks abroad;
So, when this cloud had pass'd away,
Bright was the noon-tide of their day,
And all serene its setting ray.

END OF CANTO FIFTH.

HAROLD THE DAUNTLESS.

CANTO SIXTH.

HAROLD THE DAUNTLESS.

CANTO SIXTH.

Well do I hope that this my minstrel tale
Will tempt no traveller from southern fields,
Whether in tilbury, barouche, or mail,
To view the Castle of these Seven proud Shields.
Small confirmation its condition yields
To Meneville's high lay,—No towers are seen
On the wild heath, but those that Fancy builds,
And, save a fosse which tracks the moor with green,
Is nought remains to tell of what may there have been.

And yet grave authors, with the no small waste
Of their grave time, have dignified the spot

By theories, to prove the fortress placed
By Roman bands, to curb the invading Scot.
Hutchinson, Horsley, Camden, I might quote,
But rather chuse the theory less civil
Of boors, who, origin of things forgot,
Refer still to the origin of evil,
And for their master-mason chuse that master-fiend the Devil.

II.

Therefore, I say, it was on fiend-built towers
That stout Count Harold bent his wondering gaze,
When evening dew was on the heather flowers,
And the last sunbeams bade the mountain blaze,
And tinged the battlements of other days
With a bright level light ere sinking down.—
Illumined thus, the dauntless Dane surveys
The Seven proud Shields that o'er the portal frown,
And on their blazons traced high marks of old renown.

A wolf North Wales had on his armour-coat,
And Rhys of Powis-land a couchant stag;
Strath-Clwyde's strange emblem was a stranded boat,
Donald of Galloway a trotting nag;
A corn-sheaf gilt was fertile Lodon's brag;
A dudgeon-dagger was by Dunmail worn;
Northumbrian Adolf gave a sea-beat crag
Surmounted by a cross—such signs were borne
Upon these antique shields, all wasted now and worn.

III.

These scann'd, Count Harold sought the castle-door,
Whose ponderous bolts were rusted to decay;
Yet till that hour adventurous knight forbore
The unobstructed passage to essay.
More strong than armed warders in array,
And obstacle more sure than bolt or bar,
Sate in the portal Terror and Dismay,
While Superstition, who forbade to war

With foes of other mould than mortal clay,
Cast spells across the gate, and barr'd the onward way.

Vain now those spells—for soon with heavy clank
The feebly-fasten'd gate was inward push'd,
And, as it oped, through that emblazon'd rank
Of antique shields the wind of evening rush'd
With sound most like a groan, and then was hush'd.
Is none who on such spot such sounds could hear
But to his heart the blood had faster rush'd,
Yet to bold Harold's breast that throb was dear—
It spoke of danger nigh, but had no touch of fear.

IV.

Yet Harold and his page no signs have traced
Within the castle that of danger show'd;
For still the halls and courts were wild and waste,
As through their precincts the adventurers trode.
The seven huge towers rose stately, tall, and broad,
Each tower presenting to their scrutiny

A hall in which a king might make abode,
And fast beside, garnish'd both proud and high,
Was placed a bower for rest in which a king might lie.

As if a bridal there of late had been,
Deck'd stood the table in each gorgeous hall;
And yet it was two hundred years, I ween,
Since date of that unhallow'd festival.
Flagons, and ewers, and standing cups, were all
Of tarnish'd gold, or silver nothing clear,
With throne begilt, and canopy of pall,
And tapestry clothed the walls with fragments sear,—
Frail as the spider's mesh did that rich woof appear.

V.

In every bower, as round a hearse, was hung
A dusky crimson curtain o'er the bed,
And on each couch in ghastly wise were flung
The wasted reliques of a monarch dead;

Barbaric ornaments around were spread,
Vests twined with gold, and chains of precious stone,
And golden circlets, meet for monarch's head;
While grinn'd, as if in scorn amongst them thrown,
The wearer's fleshless scull, alike with dust bestrown.

For these were they who, drunken with delight,
On pleasure's opiate pillow laid their head,
For whom the bride's shy footstep, slow and light,
Was changed ere morning to the murderer's tread.
For human bliss and woe in the frail thread
Of human life are all so closely twined,
That till the shears of fate the texture shred,
The close succession cannot be disjoin'd,
Nor dare we from one hour judge that which comes behind.

VI.

But where the work of vengeance had been done,
In that seventh chamber, was a sterner sight;

There of the witch-brides lay each skeleton,
Still in the posture as to death when dight.
For this lay prone, by one blow slain outright;
And that, as one who struggled long in dying;
One bony hand held knife as if to smite;
One bent on fleshless knees as mercy crying;
One lay across the door, as kill'd in act of flying.

The stern Dane smiled this charnel-house to see,—
For his chafed thought return'd to Metelill;—
And "Well," he said, "hath woman's perfidy,
Empty as air, as water volatile,
Been here avenged.—The origin of ill
Through woman rose, the Christian doctrine saith;
Nor deem I, Gunnar, that thy minstrel skill
Can show example where a woman's breath
Hath made a true-love vow, and, tempted, kept her faith."

VII.

The minstrel boy half smiled, half sigh'd,
And his half-filling eyes he dried,
And said, " The theme I should but wrong,
Unless it were my dying song,
(Our Scalds have said in dying hour
The Northern harp has treble power,)
Else could I tell of woman's faith
Defying danger, scorn, and death.
Firm was that faith,—as diamond stone
Pure and unflaw'd,—her love unknown,
And unrequited ;—firm and pure,
Her stainless faith could all endure ;
From clime to clime,—from place to place,—
Through want, and danger, and disgrace,
A wanderer's wayward steps could trace.—
All this she did, and guerdon none
Required, save that her burial-stone

Should make at length the secret known,
Thus hath a faithful woman done.—
Not in each breast such truth is laid,
But Eivir was a Danish maid."

VIII.

" Thou art a wild enthusiast," said
Count Harold, " for thy Danish maid;
And yet, young Gunnar, I will own
Her's were a faith to rest upon.
But Eivir sleeps beneath her stone,
And all resembling her are gone.
What maid e'er show'd such constancy
In plighted faith, like thine to me?
But couch thee, boy; the darksome shade
Falls thickly round, nor be dismay'd
Because the dead are by.
They were as we; our little day
O'erspent, and we shall be as they.

Yet near me, Gunnar, be thou laid,
Thy couch upon my mantle made,
That thou mayst think, should fear invade,
Thy master slumbers nigh."
Thus couch'd they in that dread abode,
Until the beams of dawning glow'd.

XI.

An alter'd man Lord Harold rose,
When he beheld that dawn unclose—
There's trouble in his eyes,
And traces on his brow and cheek
Of mingled awe and wonder speak:
" My page," he said, " arise;—
Leave we this place, my page."—Nor more
He utter'd till the castle-door
They cross'd—but there he paused and said,
" My wildness hath awaked the dead—
Disturb'd the sacred tomb!—

Methought this night I stood on high
Where Hecla roars in middle sky,
And in her cavern'd gulphs could spy
The central place of doom!
And there before my mortal eye
Souls of the dead came flitting by,
Whom fiends, with many a fiendish cry,
Bore to that evil den!
My eyes grew dizzy, and my brain
Was wilder'd, as the elvish train,
With shriek and howl, dragg'd on amain
Those who had late been men.

X.

" With hagard eyes and streaming hair,
" Jutta, the Sorceress, was there,
And there pass'd Wulfstane, lately slain,
All crush'd and foul with bloody stain.—
More had I seen, but that uprose
A whirlwind wild, and swept the snows;

And with such sound as when at need
A champion spurs his horse to speed,
Three armed knights rush on, who lead
Caparison'd a sable steed.
Sable their harness, and there came
Through their closed visors sparks of flame.
The first proclaim'd in sounds of fear,
'Harold the Dauntless, welcome here!'
The next cried, 'Jubilee! we've won
Count Witikind the Waster's son!'
And the third rider sternly spoke,
'Mount, in the name of Zernebock!—
From us, O Harold, were thy powers,—
Thy strength, thy dauntlessness, are ours;
Nor think, a vassal thou of hell,
With hell canst strive.' The fiend spoke true!
My inmost soul the summons knew,
As captives know the knell,
That says the headsman's sword is bare,
And with an accent of despair
Commands them quit their cell.

I felt resistance was in vain,
My foot had that fell stirrup ta'en,
My hand was on the fatal mane,
When to my rescue sped
That Palmer's visionary form,
And—like the passing of a storm—
The demons yell'd and fled!

XI.

" His sable cowl, flung back, reveal'd
The features it before conceal'd;
And, Gunnar, I could find
In him whose counsels strove to stay
So oft my course on wilful way,
My father Witikind!
Doom'd for his sins, and doom'd for mine,
A wanderer upon earth to pine
Until his son shall turn to grace,
And smooth for him a resting-place!—

Gunnar, he must not haunt in vain
This world of wretchedness and pain:
I'll tame my wilful heart to live
In peace—to pity and forgive—
And thou, for so the vision said,
Must in thy Lord's repentance aid.
Thy mother was a prophetess,
He said, who by her skill could guess
How close the fatal textures join
Which knit thy thread of life with mine;
Then, dark, he hinted of disguise
She framed to cheat too curious eyes,
That not a moment might divide
Thy fated footsteps from my side.
Methought while thus my sire did teach,
I caught the meaning of his speech,
Yet seems its purport doubtful now."—
His hand then sought his thoughtful brow.—
Then first he mark'd, that in the tower
His glove was left at waking hour.

XII.

Trembling at first, and deadly pale,
Had Gunnar heard the vision'd tale;
But when he learn'd the dubious close,
He blush'd like any opening rose,
And, glad to hide his tell-tale cheek,
Hied back that glove of mail to seek;
When soon a shriek of deadly dread
Summon'd his master to his aid.

XIII.

What sees Count Harold in that bower,
So late his resting-place?—
The semblance of the Evil Power,
Adored by all his race!
Odinn in living form stood there,
His cloak the spoils of Polar bear;
For plumy crest, a meteor shed
Its gloomy radiance o'er his head,

Yet veil'd its hagard majesty
To the wild lightnings of his eye.
Such height was his, as when in stone
O'er Upsal's giant altar shown;
So flow'd his hoary beard;
Such was his lance of mountain-pine,
So did his sevenfold buckler shine;—
But when his voice he rear'd,
Deep, without harshness, slow and strong,
The powerful accents roll'd along,
And, while he spoke, his hand was laid
On captive Gunnar's shrinking head.

XIV.

"Harold," he said, "what rage is thine
To quit the worship of thy line,
To leave thy Warrior-God?—
With me is glory or disgrace,
Mine is the onset and the chase,

Embattled hosts before my face
Are wither'd by a nod.
Wilt thou then forfeit that high seat,
Deserved by many a dauntless feat
Among the heroes of thy line,
Eric and fiery Thorarine?—
Thou wilt not. Only I can give
The joys for which the valiant live,
Victory and vengeance—only I
Can give the joys for which they die,—
The immortal tilt—the banquet full,
The brimming draught from foeman's scull.
Mine art thou, witness this thy glove,
The faithful pledge of vassal's love."

XV.

"Tempter," said Harold, firm of heart,
"I charge thee, hence! whate'er thou art,
I do defy thee—and resist
The kindling frenzy of my breast,

Waked by thy words; and of my mail
Nor glove, nor buckler, splent, nor nail,
Shall rest with thee—that youth release,
And God, or Demon, part in peace."—
" Eivir," the Shape replied, " is mine,
Mark'd in the birth-hour with my sign.
Think'st thou that priest with drops of spray
Could wash that blood-red mark away?
Or that a borrow'd sex and name
Can abrogate a Godhead's claim?"—
Thrill'd this strange speech through Harold's brain,
He clench'd his teeth in high disdain,
For not his new-born faith subdued
Some tokens of his ancient mood.—
" Now, by the hope so lately given
Of better trust and purer heaven,
I will assail thee, fiend!"—Then rose
His mace, and with a storm of blows
The mortal and the demon close.

XVI.

Smoke roll'd above, fire flash'd around,
Darken'd the sky and shook the ground;
But not the artillery of hell,
The bickering lightning, nor the rock
Of turrets to the earthquake's shock,
Could Harold's courage quell.
Sternly the Dane his purpose kept,
And blows on blows resistless heap'd,
Till quail'd that demon form,
And—for his power to hurt or kill
Was bounded by a higher will—
Evanish'd in the storm.
Nor paused the Champion of the North,
But raised, and bore his Eivir forth,
From that wild scene of fiendish strife,
To light, to liberty, and life!

XVII.

He placed her on a bank of moss,
A silver runnel bubbled by,
And new-born thoughts his soul engross,
And tremors yet unknown across
His stubborn sinews fly,
The while with timid hand the dew
Upon her brow and neck he threw,
And mark'd how life with rosy hue
On her pale cheek revived anew,
And glimmer'd in her eye.
Inly he said, " That silken tress,
What blindness mine that could not guess,
Or how could page's rugged dress
That bosom's pride belie?
O, dull of heart, through wild and wave
In search of blood and death to rave,
With such a partner nigh !"

XVIII.

Then in the mirror'd pool he peer'd,
Blamed his rough locks and shaggy beard,
The stains of recent conflict clear'd,—
And thus the Champion proved,
That he fears now who never fear'd,
And loves who never loved.
And Eivir—life is on her cheek,
And yet she will not move or speak,
Nor will her eyelid fully ope;
Perchance it loves, that half-shut eye,
Through its long fringe, reserved and shy,
Affection's opening dawn to spy;
And the deep blush, which bids its dye
O'er cheek, and brow, and bosom fly,
Speaks shame-facedness and hope.

XIX.

But vainly seems the Dane to seek
For terms his new-born love to speak,—

For words, save those of wrath and wrong,
Till now were strangers to his tongue;
So, when he raised the blushing maid,
In blunt and honest terms he said,—
('Twere well that maids, when lovers woo,
Heard none more soft, were all as true,)
"Eivir! since thou for many a day
Hast follow'd Harold's wayward way,
It is but meet that in the line
Of after-life I follow thine.
To morrow is Saint Cuthbert's tide,
And we will grace his altar's side,
A Christian knight and Christian bride;
And of Witikind's son shall the marvel be said,
That on the same morn he was christen'd and wed."

END OF CANTO SIXTH.

CONCLUSION.

And now, Ennui, what ails thee, weary maid?
And why these listless looks of yawning sorrow?
No need to turn the page, as if 'twere lead,
Or fling aside the volume till to-morrow.—
Be cheer'd—'tis ended—and I will not borrow,
To try thy patience more, one anecdote
From Bartholine, or Perinskiold, or Snorro.
Then pardon thou thy minstrel, who hath wrote
A Tale six cantos long, yet scorn'd to add a note.

FINIS.

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